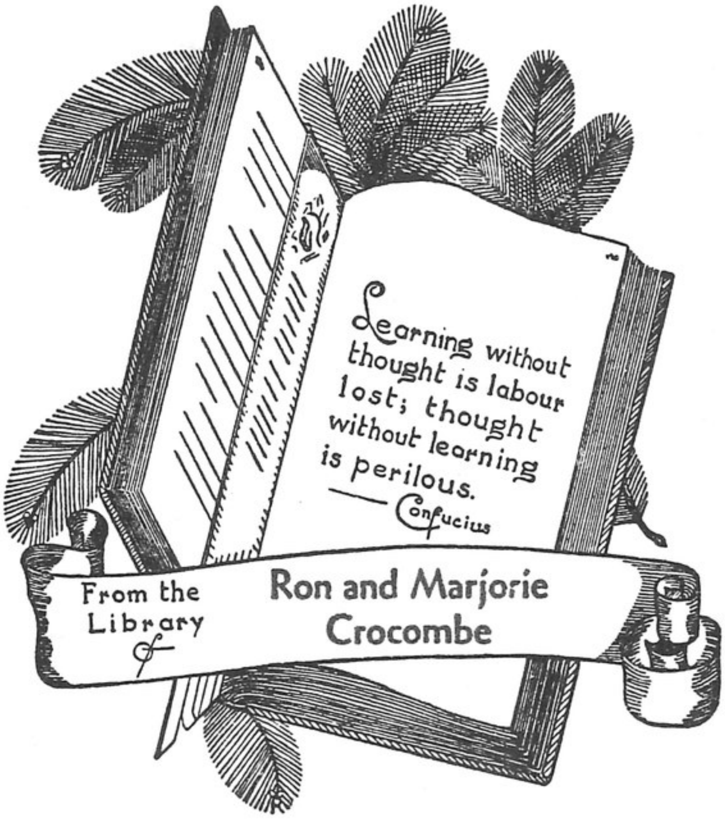
# MARJORIE CROCOMBE

## E VA'INE TOA, E RANGATIRA

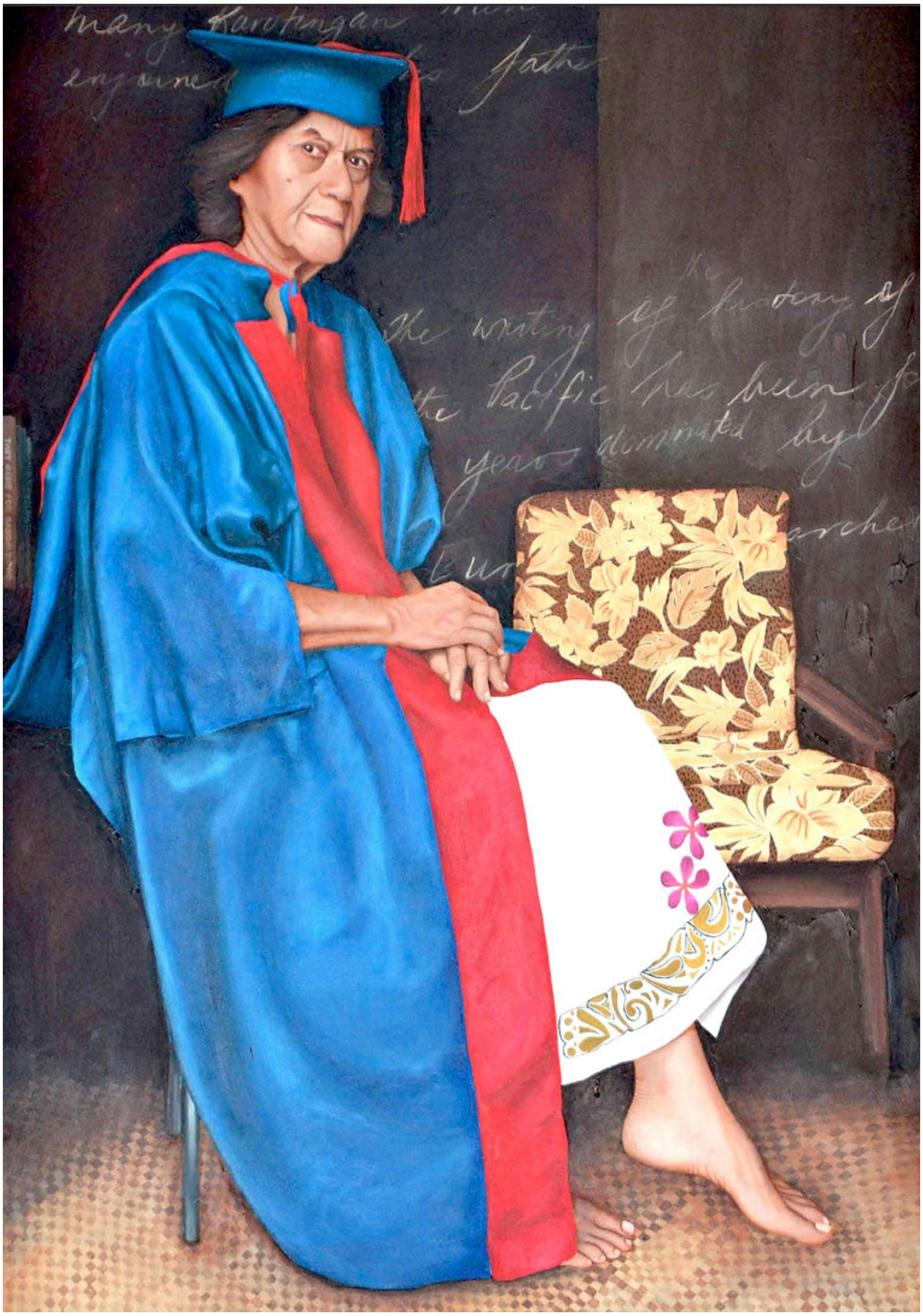
## 'Akangāteitei'anga: A Tribute to Her Life and Work

Edited by Linda Crowl,
Roderick Dixon,
and Vaine Wichman

USP
COOK ISLANDS


Learning without thought is labour lost; thought without learning is perilous.
— Confucius
From the Library of
Ron and Marjorie Crocombe

# Marjorie Crocombe
# E Va'ine Toa
# E Rangatira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the writing of the history of
the Pacific has been for
years dominated by
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*Portrait of Dr. Marjorie Tua'inekore Tere Crocombe; artist Nanette Lela'ulu, 2012; commissioned by the University of the South Pacific Cook Islands Campus to celebrate conferring of the degree D. Litt (honoris causa). The artist has pictured Marjorie in doctoral robes with bare feet on a woven mat emphasising her 'groundedness' in the Pacific. On the blackboard behind her are lines from her ground-breaking book "Cannibals and Converts - Radical Change in the Cook Islands". Professor Ron Crocombe's empty chair stands beside her depicting the absent 'other half' of a 50-year partnership. Ron had died a few years earlier.*

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*Illustrations on pages 64 and 70, courtesy of the artist Joan Gragg;*
*on pages 93,103 and opposite half-title, courtesy of the artist Mahiriki Tangaroa.*

*I shall pass through this world but once.*
*So any good that I can do or kindness*
*I can show, let me do it now,*
*for I shall not pass this way again.*

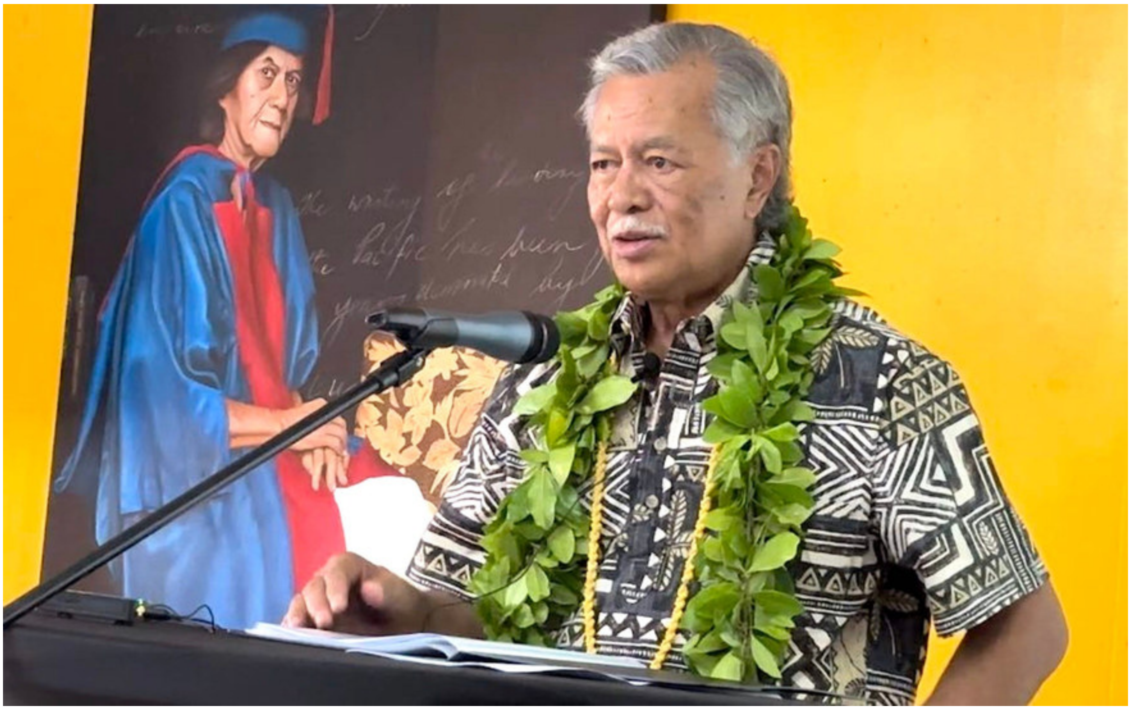
Ex Libris

Ron & Marjorie Crocombe

# Foreword

## HENRY PUNA

FORMER SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM
FORMER PRIME MINISTER OF THE COOK ISLANDS



Kia orana tatou katoatoa i te aroa maata o to tatou Atua.

Warm Pacific and Rarotonga greetings to you all.

It feels like mere months since we paid respects to Marjorie at her funeral and I know for some, it may feel like only yesterday, when a commemorative gathering before this amazing portrait of Professor Marjorie Crocombe, celebrated her 92 years of life. This book in Marjorie's honour allows renewed momentum for her legacy to continue.

In this short foreword, I cannot begin to do justice to the sheer volume and breadth of Marjorie's work and achievements. This will be covered in the following chapters which point to the multifaceted impacts and contributions – the legacy – of an exemplary and prolific writer, author, and educator.

Speaking to Marjorie's legacy … I take my cue from the theme of the Pacific Islands University Research Network (PIURN) conference recently held in Rarotonga – exploring our sea of islands – *te kimikimianga matatio no roto i to tatou au pa enua.* Marjorie was one such explorer, or way-finder, one who creates new pathways and is inspired to carve out new directions for others to follow.

As Marjorie's prolific work has clearly demonstrated, exploring texts as a scholar and writer began for her with history in mind. Where had we come from, who had shaped and shared our stories? What was our history? This was exemplified through her excellence in rendering a Pacific lens to the works of Ta'unga, Ruatoka, Maretu, and in the process, the content and context for Pacific studies and texts came into being.

These works did not just create new access to the histories of our region, at a time when education systems of our newly founded democracies taught Western narratives of key events. They embodied the profound mana and power involved in having Cook Islands Māori records of generations we could not even imagine, retold in texts that brought the histories of our early pioneering missionaries, their world views and accounts, to life.

The early impacts of Majorie's skills as a regionalist can be seen in her formation of the University of the South Pacific's creative and writing collectives which nurtured a cadre of globally respected creative artists and writers and regional content that survives to this day, testifying to her lifelong encouragement of creative individuals, journalists and others she mentored.

The University of the South Pacific has today a full degree programme in the Cook Islands Māori language. The degree was introduced in 2018 and once established, was followed by programs in Tongan and Niuafo'ou, Vagahau Niue, and Rotuman.

The first students with a Diploma in Cook Islands Māori graduated in 2021. What many don't know is the backstory and a moment here at the Cook Islands' campus, when Majorie challenged me, as the then Prime Minister, and Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific, to walk the talk I had shared on strengthening indigenous languages in our education systems.

She was not seeking to make me uncomfortable, but she did. Her manner has always been so frank as to send the most skilled politicians running for cover. But always seeking solutions, her candour would inspire us to be more aware of how we can do more with what we have.

In closing, I will note the use of the word festschrift and its intention to honour, through publication, the achievements of our leading thinkers – usually academics, during their lifetimes. There is another word to capture those who are honoured when they are no longer with us – however, I do prefer the festive connotation of the festschrift, and long may it remain.

We carry our loved ones within us, as living memories. Their legacy is often as tangible as if they were still here. The achievements of their lifetime are ours, for our lives too. The success of moments like these is that, while we honour the achievements of a career that has been long and industrious, we take the best from our past for a grounded present, then the best from the present for a better future.

This is the hope I have for readers of this *'akangāteitei'anga.*

Meitaki ma'ata, I thank you. Enjoy the book.

*Adapted from the Secretary-General's opening remarks to delegates to the 5th PIURN USP Cook Islands Festschrift for Dr Marjorie Crocombe, 5 July 2023.*

Welcome to
USP

# E Va'ine Toa, E Rangitira: Marjorie Tua'inekore Tere Crocombe, D.Litt.

DEBI FUTTER-PUATI

The University of the South Pacific was deeply honoured to host a last event for Marjorie Tua'inekore Tere Crocombe or, as most of us knew her in more recent times, Mama Marjorie. She was a hugely influential Va'ine Toa E Rangatira of the Cook Islands who made an immense impact on generations of Cook Islands writers and scholars and who leaves behind an enormous legacy of scholarly work. Marjorie was a teacher, writer, academic and activist. She was an ally for all things scholarly, not only in the Cook Islands, but her influence, alongside her loss, swims within the currents and tides across Moana Nui o Kiva.

Marjorie's academic life began as a teacher graduating from Ardmore Teachers' Training College in New Zealand. After a year of teaching in Auckland, she returned to Rarotonga to begin work for the Cook Islands Department of Education as a schoolteacher. Then in 1955, she became the first Cook Islands female lecturer at Nikao Teachers' College. During this time, she worked on developing primary school readers in the Cook Islands Māori language – her passion for revitalization of reo Kuki Airani was strong from the beginning of her career. She fell in love with Ron, they were married and began raising children, while moving *several* times to different countries, but she continued her academic pursuits, writing history that was published in New Zealand and Australia. In 1971, she and Lionel Brown became USP's first Cook Islands graduates. Majoring in history and sociology, she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts. Between the Diploma of Teaching, family life, and the BA, Marjorie also studied creative writing.

In the 1970s, Marjorie was the editor of the *Mana Annual of Creative Writing*. The first edition in 1973 included 111 pages of stories, poems, articles, and illustrations by more than 80 Pacific writers, such as Albert Wendt, Konai Helu Thaman, and Alistair Campbell – many of whom went on to become the Pacific's foremost and distinguished authors and academics. When one thinks of Marjorie, one thinks of the word MANA. As Marjorie herself wrote in the first editorial of the annual "the word Mana means power | authority | influence | something infused with magic | and prestige" (1973:1). Allow me now to take Marjorie's words, the ones she used to describe Mana, and apply them to her.

## Authority

To attest to Marjorie's authority, the University of the South Pacific awarded her an honorary degree, a Doctor of Letters, a D.Litt., in 2011. A Doctor of Letters is highly prestigious. It is a higher doctorate than a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and is only awarded in recognition of superior accomplishment in the creative or cultural arts. This doctorate is conferred *honoris causa* to recognise and honour a lifetime of excellence in a particular field, or contribution to society. USP awarded this degree to recognise Marjorie's long-standing status as a senior staff member of the university, and her exceptional academic, literary, and community achievements. The conferring of the D.Litt. to Marjorie provides ample testimony to the Mana and authority of this woman.

## Power

When I think of the word 'power' in conjunction with Marjorie, I think of her influence. She continued to support scholars right through her life and to the last of her days. University of Otago Pacific Studies scholar Dr Emma Powell considers Marjorie's influence such that she argues that perhaps there would not be such a thing as Pacific Literature at all if Marjorie and her colleagues had not tirelessly given their time and energy to the South Pacific Creative Arts Society. She never ceased encouraging others to write, to continue their education at whatever level, to challenge the status quo, and she constantly reminded people that their stories were important to tell. "Just write!", she often said. Marjorie used her power to support, encourage, and challenge the next generation of writers and scholars. This is the way power should be used in academia. She was humble and generous with her knowledge and time throughout her life and what is a more powerful way to live than that?

## Influence

We heard much about her influence during family services, and through the previous two words associated with Mana, but when I think of the word influence, I think of what I call the 'Marjorie effect'. When Marjorie asked you to do something, you somehow just wanted to do it. You felt inspired by her wisdom and encouraged by her compliments. Or maybe, it was that expression so expertly caught by Nanette Lauleu'u in her portrait of Marjorie (frontispiece, this volume) that made you shake in your boots and too scared to say no?

In terms of influence, Marjorie was always a champion of USP and together, she and Professor Ron advocated strongly the vision of a decentralized regional university. Marjorie as Director of USP Extension Services was responsible with her team to deliver studies right across the university's 12 member countries. Within the Crocombe Archives, now held here on campus at Te Puna Vai Mārama | the Cook Islands Centre for Research, we will hold Marjorie's papers, writings, and musings close, and honour her legacy and enable her thoughts to continue to influence future Pacific academics.

## Prestige

The word prestige means respect, esteem, and kudos. In 2019, when Te Vairanga Kite Pakari | the Cook Islands Research Association was considering whom they could ask to be their Patron, we asked ourselves who was an academic that we held in high enough esteem and who had the appropriate kudos to sit as our Patron? It was no surprise that Marjorie was our choice. She was the person who had most influenced this contemporary group of Cook Islands researchers, most of whom had PhDs. All of us held Marjorie in such prestige that we asked her to be our Patron. Imagine our shock when she said no! However, we did manage to convince her in the end. She was never one to seek the limelight but preferred to be the person behind the scenes, working at the grassroots level to implement change.

## Something infused with magic

Marjorie's magic was that in her many roles – whether writer, researcher, teacher, mentor, or role model – she instilled belief into those around her. She was a visionary of a decolonised Pacific, where the first languages of all Pacific nations would be revitalized through both oratory and written spaces. As Marjorie pointed out in *Cannibals and Converts*, her translation, annotation, and editing of the Cook Islands missionary Maretu's 1871 manuscript, "The writing of the history of the Pacific has been for many years dominated by European researchers …. The published results have inevitably been Eurocentric and will continue to be so until Pacific Islanders have adequate opportunities to present facts, ideas and evaluations from indigenous sources" (1983:13). And Marjorie set out to grow indigenous experts in all kinds of fields. She was visionary in encouraging Pacific peoples to be aware of their untapped talent. She inspired hundreds of people to write, to research, to value, and to record their own cultural writing to offset the dominant viewpoints of foreign writers. Her magic was her post- or de-colonial mindset and sowing that mindset in those around her.

Her magic was the ability to articulate how furious racism made her, to challenge the racism she experienced firsthand as an Indigenous woman. That 'something that is infused with magic' she had; whereby she pushed back on the all too present sexism that, more often than not, went hand in hand with racism, and in doing so, she became an Indigenous activist and feminist role-model for other Pacific women to look to for strength. Today, you see Marjorie everywhere in the younger Pacific feminist undertakings. They owe a huge debt to her persistence in giving birth to a Pacific literature that had feminism in spirit. Historian of the Black Pacific Quito Swan talks about Marjorie's importance in the birth of a Pacific literature that was inclusive of the voice of young Pacific women (2018). *Mana* published work from all over the Pacific, including by such women as Nora Vagi Brash, Haunani-Kay Trask, and many more.

To paraphrase the work of Sara Ahmed, it might be assumed that feminism travels from [New Zealand and Australia to the Cook Islands]. It might be assumed that feminism is what [these two countries give to the Pacific]. That assumption is a traveling assumption, one that tells a feminist story in a certain way, a story that is much repeated; a history of how feminism acquired utility as an imperial gift. That is not my story. We need to tell other feminist stories (Hemmings 2005). Marjorie's story was a feminist story.

The words MANA and Marjorie are synonymous. Our friend and mentor, you will be sorely missed. May you rest in peace Marjorie Tua'inekore Tere Crocombe. Our sincere condolences go to the Crocombe 'anau and all those that mourn the loss of Marjorie alongside us.

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## About the author

**Debi Futter-Puati** worked as a resource teacher of learning and behavior before joining the Cook Islands Ministry of Education and later the Cook Islands Ministry of Health. She earned an MA in history from the University of Auckland and a PhD from RMIT University, Melbourne. She is Director of the University of the South Pacific's Cook Islands Campus. This text has been adapted from her eulogy at Marjorie's funeral service at USP Cook Islands campus on 26 July 2022.

*Randy and Konai Thaman with Marjorie Crocombe, Rarotonga Airport, 1 August 2016*

# Remembering Marjie

KONAI HELU THAMAN

This presentation is a personal tribute to Marjorie Crocombe, or Marjie as she was known to many of her friends. For me, Marjie was an amazing, productive, and inspiring human being, and I count myself very fortunate to have known her and her loving family, including her husband Ron, sons Tata and Kevin, daughter Nari, and Ron's son Sam. Marjie's contribution to academia, the arts, to community, and to the world generally are well documented online and in various publications with which most people are familiar. This presentation is based mainly on her impact on my life and works from the early 1970s until now.

I remember Marjie mainly through my creative works where she has permanently etched her influence on my writing especially relating to the poems published by Mana Publications, contained in five collections in English and one in French. She critiqued and inspired my writing, as well as helped publish and distribute my books over a period of almost half a century. To state that Marjie has influenced my creative writing from the very beginning would be a great understatement, particularly given the fact that most people, especially young people, know me through my poetry more than anything else I have written and/or published.

For what was it you thought
When the moon swam out of the sea
I thought I caught a glimpse of you
When was the first time birds learnt to fly
It was when I first learned to write
(Take Off, *Langakali,* 1981).

Remembering Marjie, I share with you the background and context of how she came to be an important part of my world. It began a good five years before I even met her. As a young teacher returning to Tonga from New Zealand in 1969, I was looking forward to teaching high school geography and history, for these were my major teaching subjects at university and teachers' college. However, upon visiting the Education Department in Tonga, I was instructed by the then Minister of Education to go and teach at Tonga High School (THS), my old school; but first, he said, I needed to meet the principal. At the appointed time, I met Mr Sealy in his office. I was eager to start teaching the following week. Imagine my surprise when he said, "Konai, you will be teaching Form 6 Geography, Form 5 English, and Form 3 Social Studies." "But I did not major in English, Sir," I said. "I know," he replied. "But you took English 1 at university, didn't you?" he asked. My heart dropped, and enthusiasm left me. I had never been good in English at school; in fact, I had hated it … and almost failed the New Zealand Secondary Certificate (NZSC) English paper. At university, I took English because I needed a foreign language unit, and the Education secretary in Tonga would not allow me to take Māori because, as he wrote, "we don't teach Māori here."

So, the teacher for F5R English was going to be Miss Helu. I left Mr Sealy thinking that this was my punishment for missing many English lectures at university. Form 5R turned out to be repeaters who had not passed the NZSC the previous year. Most of them, like me, did not like English. At least, I could empathise with them but that was about all I could do at the time. I sought help from the head of English, but she confessed that while most students usually did well in the language part of the English exam paper, not many liked the literature part. “That was *me,*” I told her. I knew she was not very sympathetic.

Talk about being a page ahead of the students! I worked hard in trying to teach Form 5R English including what, to me, was the logical thing to do: using the language of the students (Tongan) to teach most of the topics, although THS students were punished if caught speaking in Tongan. While most students did not like studying the recommended plays, they loved the poetry section of the prescription (syllabus), although I had to explain a lot of the different contexts of many of the poems. As I tried to explain in Tongan some of the ‘feelings’ behind the poems we read, it suddenly dawned on me that the English had not invented poetry. So, I got the students to study the words of their favourite Tongan songs and discuss why they liked them. I also encouraged them to compose songs using both Tongan and English. This early part of my teaching career was one of the most difficult and challenging.

I realized that I needed someone who could help me to help my students with the English prescription (syllabus). Fortunately, the University of the South Pacific (USP) had just opened its first Centre outside of Fiji, in Tonga, and the Centre Director Ms Blundell told me that she knew the Crocombes who were staff at USP at the time and were encouraging students to write stories and poems about their experiences. Ms Blundell also started offering weekly evening classes in creative writing, and I was eager to attend in order to learn how to improve what I was doing with Form 5R English. Whatever I learnt from her, I passed on to my students. Soon, I began to look forward to my English class instead of worrying about it. Ms Blundell hailed from England and was a career woman who spoke often about gender equality long before this notion became a normal part of our vocabulary. Most of those who attended her classes were women. Tonga needs more women poets, she used to say. She was right. There were not than many women poets or song writers in Tonga although the late Queen Salote was famous for her poetry and songs, many of which were performed in dance. I remember Ms Blundell telling me that if I was interested in poetry that I needed to keep a folder of what I had written in case I wanted to publish them. Her positive attitude compelled me to pen this little verse:

If we always knew
Where we were going
We’ll never take a step
So come with me sister
Let’s take the chance
And make the break
After all we cannot
All go back
To the land
(Women’s Lib, *You the Choice of my Parents,* 1974).

Writing for me was therapeutic, especially in a place like Tonga where age, gender, and social status were the main identifiers and bases for expectations of behavior.

My love of creative writing continued at the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB) where my husband had a job in the Geography Department in its Remote Sensing Lab (now called geographic information systems, GIS), after being a Peace Corps volunteer in Tonga. I enrolled at UCSB to pursue a Masters degree in Education while working part time as a research assistant. When feeling homesick or unhappy, I found solace in writing. However, I didn't show my work to others except my husband. One of my gym buddies was doing her Masters in English part-time, and I often followed her to the English department's Friday lunch time poetry readings where students read to one another their favourite poems or ones of their own. I looked forward to this event but was too afraid to volunteer to read some of the ones I had written. Here's a verse from one of them:

I'm showered with voices glorifying
This age of freedom
Of free love and do your own thing
But there is hate and war
…
But we hate the communists
And are apathetic towards blacks
(Though we invite them to dinner)

We are not really free
In this country of Liberty
(The Encounter, USA, *You the Choice of my Parents,* 1974).

One day, I received my copy of *Pacific Islands Monthly* (my only link to news from the Pacific) in the mail. That issue had a special page dedicated to Pacific Islands writing and something there caught my eye, something authored by Albert Wendt. Below was an invitation for Pacific Islands writers to send something for possible publication in the insert … a story or poem … to Mrs Marjorie Crocombe, C/- South Pacific Creative Arts Society, USP, Suva, Fiji. I felt brave enough to send a poem that I had earlier written, while in Tonga, entitled 'Wife's Lament.' It was inspired by a cousin and a good friend at university who had just gone through a horrible divorce and had to leave Tonga with her two children, to find a new home elsewhere. Needless to say, I was very saddened by this.

A month or two went by without a response from Mrs Crocombe. Then suddenly, a short letter arrived. "Dear Konai, … thank you for submitting your poem 'Wife's Lament.' However, while we like and want to publish it, we suggest that the title be changed to 'You the Choice of my Parents', a line from the poem itself." I was so elated that I did not bother to read the rest of the letter. My first poem to be published in something other than a school magazine. Today 'You the Choice' as many refer to it, remains my most popular poem, especially with high school staff and students, where it was part of the senior English curriculum. It even appeared in a NZ-Pacific University Entrance English paper one year!

You come clad in your fine mats and tapa cloth
Your brown skin bursting with fresh perfumed oil
And your eyes shining like stars in a clear night
You the choice of my parents

You will bring them wealth and fame
With your western-type education
And second-hand car
Yet you do not know me my prince
Save that I am first born
And have known no other man

I fit your plans and schemes for the future
But you cannot see the real me
My face is masked with pretense and obedience
My smiles tell you that I care
I have no other choice

The priest has left the altar now
And the dancing has begun
I see myself dying slowly
To family and traditions
Stripped of its will and carefree spirit
Naked on the cold and lonely waters
Of a strange family shoreline
Alienated from belonging truly

I love as a mere act of duty
My soul is far away
Clinging to that familiar ironwood tree
That heralds strangers
To the land of my ancestors
I will bear you a son
To prolong your family tree
And fill the gaps of your genealogy
But when my duties are fulfilled
My spirit will return to the land of my birth
Where you will find me no more
Except for the weeping willows along the shore
(You the Choice of My Parents, *You the Choice of My Parents*, 1974).

My unending gratitude goes to the SPCAS, especially to Marjie, Albert Wendt, and such others as Howard Van Trease, Jo Nacola, Pio Manoa, and Subramani, for their encouragement and help to make my dream of becoming a poet a reality.

In early 1974, Randy and I left Santa Barbara after getting jobs at the USP in Fiji. I had completed my Masters degree and thought it would be nice to return to the 'islands' and contribute to teaching at USP and, more importantly, to meet and get to know such people as Marjie and Albert who so kindly agreed to publish my little poem. Many of my relatives were surprised. "Why Fiji?" they asked. We were at a place where most of them wanted to be. But we left for Fiji and have been there since then.

I remember Marjie greeting us at her house where we were invited with others for dinner soon after we arrived in Suva. I was immediately drawn to the huge map of the Pacific carved on the floor of their living room. How cool was that?! Papa Ron was also there and was the centre of attention as he spoke about lots of things while asking questions of the listeners, many of whom were new staff members or students of USP. He was like an encyclopedia when it came to things academic and Pacific. He personally knew almost every important person in the different countries that owned the USP. Furthermore, he was like my husband: always asking questions. As a teacher, I realized the importance of asking questions although it was not something that was encouraged when I was a child growing up in Tonga where adults would tell you off, "*Ko e ha fua e fa'a 'eke? Fie 'io!* (Why so many questions? Stop wanting to know everything!)" Ron taught me that wanting to know everything was ok … that questioning *was* the basis for learning, teaching, knowledge, and wisdom itself. Two decades later, as part of my UNESCO Chair work, I travelled around the world promoting the goals of Lifelong Learning (Learning to know; learning to be; learning to do; and learning to live together), and I remembered Ron and Randy and how they taught me and hundreds of others about the unbreakable link between learning and questioning.

Marjie also loved questioning, but she asked different types of questions – mostly personal and ones that touched both the head and the heart. For me, questions from the heart were, "Do you have everything you need in your new house?" or "You know you can get to uni taking a shortcut which takes you directly from Service Street along a little path near the Forum compound, to Second Hall?" And, always with a smile, with a smile, "Have you written more poems? Have you talked to Al Wendt? Or Howard van Trease? We are promoting creative writing and we would like to publish more of your poems …."

One day I told her that I had written a few poems, some of which I was afraid to see in print as they might cause some of my friends and relatives in Tonga to think I was *fie poto* (pretending to be wise). She laughed and said, "Those kinds of poems are the ones I like …. Never mind what people think …. Just do it." One such poem, which appeared in my first collection, did not go down well with a few people in Tonga, including a female relative who, I guessed, had aspirations of becoming a member of parliament one day:

I tremble
At the thought
Of going to town
And meeting brutal men
Who think that white is clean
And black is dirty
Of politicians who lie
And make lots of half promises
And of ordinary people
Who believe them
Just because they wear ties
(I tremble, *You the Choice of my Parents,* 1974).

Imagine my surprise when Albert Wendt rang me one morning and asked if I could bring him all the poems I had written. I was shocked. “But I don’t have many,” I meekly replied. “Never mind. Just bring what you have,” he said. He sounded serious, so I looked through my files and put a few poems in a folder and made my way to his office. “Marjie and I have decided to bring out a collection of your poems soon,” he said. “We also plan to run workshops for Pacific students and staff here and elsewhere in the region to encourage them to write poems and stories for our young people to read.” I felt exhilarated and thought that finally Pacific school students could read stories and poems that were meaningful and to which they could easily relate.

Soon after that meeting, I found myself at the USP Extension Services printing room, where Marjie and one of her staff, were collating and stapling pages and putting these into a pile. “Almost all done except for the cover,” she told me. “We need something Tongan for the front and back covers,” she continued.  “Any ideas of a Tongan design?” she asked. I knew that my favourite kupesi (design) was the Tokelau Feletoa (a popular kupesi and now part of the design on the USP Chancellor’s gown). She liked it, and that was the one we chose for the cover. After a long gestation, my very first poetry collection, *You the Choice of My Parents* (1974), was born.

The rest, as they say, is history. More collections appeared after *You the Choice*: *Langakali* (1981), *Hingano* (1987), *Kakala* (1993), and *Songs of Love* (1999). However, *You the Choice* remains my signature poem and the most cited of all the poems I have written.

Pacific indigenous peoples have a long history of creative expressions that have been passed on for generations for millennia – through songs, dances, chants, customs, etc about different types of knowledge, as well as ways of doing and being. Today, many of us continue these creative expressions through a variety of media using modern technologies that we never imagined we would use. Writing as we know it was an introduced form of creative expression, and today our young people, as well as creative writers, are using a variety of different mediums and technologies to reach out to others in order to share their stories and struggles. It would be good if more of our young people were able to research the possible impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on Pacific creative expressions as well as other aspects of Pacific life.

However, as mentioned earlier, I owe a lot to Marjorie Crocombe and Albert Wendt, whose continuing encouragement was the main reason I'm here today. They were instrumental in the creation of the South Pacific Creative Arts Society (SPCAS) in 1971, and the journal *Mana* that first published an insert in *Pacific Islands Monthly* in the early 1970s. Most of us who benefitted from this movement were staff and students of the USP and the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG). Before *Mana,* the USP students had their own journal UNISPEC, and I was told that, in 1977 at a meeting of the South Pacific Association of Commonwealth Literature and Languages at the University of Queensland, Pacific literature was becoming more known and attracting writers and critics alike.

Sadly for many of USP's staff and students, both Marjie and Albert left USP in the late 1980s. However, the USP's Institute of Pacific Studies, under Professor Ron Crocombe, had taken over the publications for *Mana,* and from 1991 Linda Crowl began many of the editing tasks. Under this arrangement, my collections *Kakala* (1993) and *Songs of Love* (1999) were published, as well as others such as Teresia Teaiwa's *Searching for Nei Nim'anoa* (1993) and Celestine Kulaghoe's *Raindrops* (1998). Later, Teresia and others formed the New Waves Writers' Collective which found a home at the USP's Oceania Centre for Arts & Culture under the mentorship of Epeli Hau'ofa. They encouraged young writers, especially students, to work towards publishing and other creative works, such as dance and music making.

The departure of Marjie and Albert marked an abrupt pause for many of the creative activities associated with USP. Some students completed their studies and went back to their home countries and took over important jobs in governments or became politicians, while others focused on starting families or businesses and continued with higher degrees elsewhere. I was fortunate that my work as UNESCO Chair and Professor of Education and Culture meant travelling within the USP region and beyond, including to New Zealand where Marjie was the Director of Auckland University's newly created Centre of Pacific Studies, temporarily housed at Māori Studies. She invited me a few times to give lectures to her students and to speak with those who were interested in pursuing a creative writing career. Albert Wendt was also at Auckland University with the English Department. Both continued their work in helping bring out the creative talents of Pacific and other students under their care. I remember one day while at the Centre of Pacific Studies, when a young lady I had not seen before came and asked for me. She told me that Professor Albert Wendt had told her to come and talk to me about creative writing and poetry. Her name was Selina Marsh (subsequently New Zealand's Poet Laureate).

As well as her talent in encouraging, mentoring and caring for young Pacific Islands students and staff in many fields of creative endeavour, Marjie had a great sense of humour. At times, I was not sure whether she was joking or serious or both. I remember a time when we were in Auckland and both talking (seriously) about coups and she asked me if I thought there would be coups occurring in other USP member countries. I thought hard about this and said, "I don't know … most don't have big armies to start with." She just looked at me and laughed, then asked, "Do you like wine?" I said, "Yes, but it's too early in the morning." She said, "Let's go wine tasting, shall we? It's more fun than staying here. We'll go to the hotel across the road: there is a bus that will pick up people from there." So, off we went, got the bus at the Hyatt that took us to West Auckland, the Waitakeres and the Henderson wineries. I remembered these places well because, as a geography student at Auckland University in the mid-1960s, our lecturer took us there on a field trip, and I remember vividly visiting the Nobilo winery, the first winery I ever visited. Marjie pointed out a little school where she had taught in her early days of teaching. We had so much fun that day. Today, our daughter Batiri and her family live very close to the wine areas of West Auckland and every time we go wine tasting, I remind them about the time when I followed Marjie's creative path to understanding the geography and history of Auckland wines.

As well as a friend and mentor, Marjie was like an older sister to me. I am the eldest of four children, and I have two brothers and a younger sister. I envied my sister's short and round figure as I was tall and skinny, and some children at school called me *va'akau* (stick). While I was outgoing and always loved to go everywhere, she was shy and preferred to stay home. In our younger days, when visitors came home, we were expected to dance or recite passages from the Bible as part of a ritual that our granduncle used to like. However, most of the time I did a solo performance and she did a disappearance act instead. As the eldest child, I was told that I had to set a good example, so I had no choice. My aunt, who was a dance teacher, said to me, "*Malimali!* (Smile!)" In my head, I responded, "How can I smile when I don't like what I am doing?" I shared this part of my childhood with Marjie one day, and I will always remember what she said, "Too bad, Konai, you are the eldest and that was what you were supposed to do."

Marjie was not one for pretending that she enjoyed something when she did not, a trait that I think we both shared, although it was one that I developed as I got older and more honest with my feelings. Marjie, however, was better in hiding her indignation. One day, I barged into her office at USP to complain about a colleague who asked me why Pacific students were so rude; why they never joined in any class discussion; why, when he asked someone a question, they would look away; why, despite distributing readings that he had photocopied (because they did not have textbooks), most did not even take the time to read them? etc. When I explained what happened to Marjie, she looked up and said with a smirk, "Don't get angry. You're the one who teaches culture and education: go find out." I knew she was not happy with me. A few days later, during coffee, I brought up the subject again and said that I had concluded that my colleague was just a typical, stupid *palangi* (white foreigner). She put her coffee cup down and stared at me, "Surely, you don't mean that, Konai. Not all *palangi* are stupid!" She said, "You are married to a *palangi;* I'm also married to a *palangi.* Just because someone needs help does not make him stupid!" I knew right away that she was not happy with me. I apologized for taking up her time and left. The next day, she called me. "Do you have something for me to take to Tonga? I'm going there tomorrow." Forgiveness was Marjie's forte.

Rest in Love, big sister. Here is for you.

## Tiare (for Marjie)

Drenched in the sprays
Of Tangaloa you are born
Fragile silence falls
Gently from the eyes
Of the sky

Combing the plaited air
With a familiar beat
You are a lullaby
Unfolding to babes
Hidden secrets of the past

Then the sea calls you
To abandon your silky throne
And reach for the sun
Chasing the dawn wind
With an echoing swoop

Sometimes I see you
Sometimes I don't
Sometimes I just watch you
Move quietly away
Like waves of dying seahorses

Today you've done it again
Out of pride perhaps
Or just a heavy day
But who would complain
To the mirrored sky

After all
For every night
It creates
There is a day.

(Tiare, *Langakali,* 1981).

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## Glossary

| | |
|---|---|
| fie poto | pretending to be wise. |
| Ko e ha fua e fa'a 'eke? Fie 'io! | Why so many questions? |
| kupesi | design signifying a tapa's history, place of origin, makers. |
| malimali | smile. |
| malo 'aupito | thank you very much. |
| 'ofa atu | love to you. |
| palangi | white foreigner. |
| tiare | Gardenia tataiensis. |
| va'akau | stick. |

## About the author

**Konai Helu Thaman** was one of the longest serving faculty members at the University of the South Pacific, from 1974 until her retirement in 2019. Educated at Tonga High School (NZSC), in New Zealand (BA and Cert Secondary Teaching), University of California – Santa Barbara (MA), and the University of the South Pacific (PhD), Konai became Professor of Pacific Education and Culture, as well as a UNESCO Chair in Teacher Education and Culture. She also served as Head of the School of Humanities, Director of the Institute of Education, and Pro Vice Chancellor. She was a member of the South Pacific Creative Arts Society, which published her five poetry collections. Based in Fiji, she and Randy Thaman have two children and three grandchildren.

# “That we may be proud of our Heritage”: Marjorie Crocombe and her Legacy

EMMA NGAKURAVARU POWELL

The invitation to contribute to this volume asked if I would reflect on Marjorie Crocombe’s literary work in my capacity as a Cook Islands Māori literary scholar. I had written my Master’s thesis on the Cook Islands literary field, such as I saw it as a younger scholar in 2012, two generations or more from Marjorie (Powell, 2013). I wrote about Marjorie’s contributions to the field and her part in setting up a literary movement from the University of the South Pacific in the 1960s, synthesised from my reading of scholars like Subramani, Paul Sharrad, and Sina Va'ai. I do not intend to repeat what I wrote in that thesis except to say that the documentary record is clear about Marjorie’s influence on the field of Pacific literature, and the contributions in this festschrift will fill in the finer details with personal stories from those who were with Marjorie at the time – they were there, after all. My contribution, instead, focuses on the impacts that Marjorie Crocombe’s achievements have had on a current generation of Indigenous Pacific scholars – *my* generation of scholars – who themselves descend from her teachings and writings, and the work of those she taught and mentored. For my generation, Marjorie Crocombe’s incredible legacy of literary work and institution-building has left an indelible mark on how we understand the development of our Pacific intellectual heritage in the post-war period and more importantly, has provided the impetus to hold ourselves accountable to past and future generations by committing to the production of writing and publication.

The following contribution is framed by a genealogical approach, a narration of Marjorie within a larger intellectual genealogy of Pacific scholarship, an approach inspired by Teresia Teaiwa’s (2014) methodological approach in her iconic article ‘The Ancestors We Get to Choose: White Influences I Won’t Deny’. Teaiwa theorised her inclusion of key papa'ā ancestors in her thinking and development as a Pacific Studies scholar and went on to discuss the importance of genealogical acknowledgement and recital in the framing of one’s subjectivity. Her theorisation of genealogical practice as a way of understanding, and teaching about, ‘whiteness’ within the field of Pacific Studies was underpinned by a more expansive understanding of kinship within the Indigenous Pacific world. She described it as “the capacity (and, indeed, in some cases the preference) for assimilating Otherness through a variety of means that have genealogical implications: adoption, feeding, the exchange of land, titles, gifts and names” (p. 43). Though I do not engage with whiteness here, I do draw on Teaiwa's theorisation of kinship as a way of approaching the impact of Marjorie’s legacy on the current generation of early career researchers, and as a way of briefly considering the future that Marjorie constantly turned toward in her writings.

In the following sections, I will note key descendants of Marjorie's teachings and mentorship and acknowledge the significance of Marjorie as a key ancestor in the broader history of Pacific intellectualism. I begin by acknowledging the impact of her mentees and students, particularly the Cook Islands writers who have been so influential to a new cohort of creative and non-fiction writers in the home islands and abroad. I then go on to highlight the ways that her practice as a writer and scholar have created institutional and intellectual space for a new wave of Pacific scholars. I conclude by discussing how Marjorie's influence has shaped my own personal practice as a Cook Islands Māori woman scholar.

## Marjorie our intellectual ancestor

I did not know Marjorie very well. In 2012, I was a Master's student at the University of Auckland, and I ambitiously decided to write my thesis on Cook Islands literature after several years as a student in university English departments, starved of Pacific and Indigenous writing. My thesis focused on the poetry of Cook Islands Māori poets, Makiuti Tongia, Kauraka Kauraka, Vaine Rasmussen (now Wichman), and Jean Mason. At the time, I was studying under the supervision of literary studies scholar and poet Selina Tusitala Marsh, who had been a student of Marjorie's contemporary and "the father of Pacific literature" Albert Wendt. In the flurry of learning how to manage a large research project for the first time, an opportunity to apply for research money under the then Tuakana fund at the University of Auckland prompted conversations about a visit to Rarotonga and with whom I should speak once I got there. My preliminary reading for the thesis had quickly identified Marjorie's importance to Cook Islands literature, and Pacific literature more broadly, and Selina emphatically encouraged me to try to meet with and interview Marjorie while in the Cook Islands.

I arrived in the Cook Islands for the very first time about a week after my biological grandfather, Upokoina Teiotu, passed away. He was a well-known tumu kōrero, a cultural expert and historian, from the island of Atiu, and he had known Marjorie and her husband, Ron, well. My grandfather made a contribution to Ron's festschrift (Crowl, Crocombe, & Dixon, 2013), published posthumously, and in the spirit of genealogical practice, it feels right that I would make a contribution to Marjorie's festschrift 10 years on. Upokoina's son, my uncle Simiona Teiotu, took me to meet Marjorie in 2012. She was very fond of my uncle but did not seem very impressed with me. When I met Marjorie, I showed her my honours thesis, a brief study of three Cook Islands writers who had published in New Zealand: playwright Karl Payne and poets Audrey Brown and Ta'i George. Marjorie asked me to go and get a print copy and bring it back to her so she could read it. She then asked me to come again the next day which, of course, I did. I spent more days with her after that. We talked about the challenges of literary study in the region, the need for more writing and stories to be published by our own people, and of course, she challenged me to promote, critique, and write about our cultural heritages and histories. When I returned to New Zealand a couple of weeks later, I emailed her to thank her for her time and she responded with a very short email saying her immutable line: "Just get on with it". It was very clear to me then that Marjorie Crocombe often had her eye on the future, or at least on other pressing matters, and that I would need to figure out the next steps forward with my research work on my own.

During the remainder of my trip in 2012, I met with Makiuti Tongia and Jean Mason and talked to several others who had an interest in writing or had worked with Marjorie and Ron on projects furthering Pacific and Cook Islands scholarship. Educationalists and reo Māori advocates Ina and John Hermann hosted me for dinner, and we had a long conversation about the need for Māori immersion opportunities for young people. The (now late) artist and teacher Ian George talked to me at length about small-island politics and the importance of art education in Rarotonga and the pā 'enua. I met my mother's niece for the first time and she took me to the (now late) Jon Jonassen's house in Avarua where we sat on his porch and talked about writing and research and the future of our intellectual heritage. At every turn in those conversations, there was Marjorie Crocombe, the recommended contact, the great architect of our intellectual community in the Cook Islands, and still, even then, the person so many of her contemporaries looked to for both guidance and permission.

At that point in my work, I began to realise that the documentary record gave the appropriate nods to Marjorie Crocombe but had not necessarily been able to capture the deeply personal way she had impacted at least the Cook Islands thinkers and writers of her generation and afterward. Her husband, the late Professor Ron Crocombe, was well published and well known for his contributions to Pacific research, and was referred to as the "father of Pacific Studies". In comparison, Marjorie was mostly described in the literature in relation to Ron. In the foreword to her book *Two hundred changing years: a story of New Zealand's little sisters in the Pacific, the Cook Islands, the Tokelau Islands and Niue Island* (1962), F.R.J. Davies described Marjorie,

> This book is written by Mrs Marjorie Crocombe who was known in the Cook Islands before her marriage as Marjorie Hosking. Marjorie was one of the first Cook Island scholarship students and after became Head Prefect ... Now, in her married life, she is continuing to help by doing research and writing for which we are grateful.

While I'm sure Davies wrote the foreword with the utmost respect for Marjorie, these words underplay the wide-reaching impact and influence Marjorie had on her peers, students, husband, and on the generation - my generation - that neither Davies nor Marjorie knew at the time.

When I think back to this moment of realisation in Rarotonga, I appreciate it probably wasn't the best time to gauge Marjorie's influence despite the enlightening conversations with her peers and mentees. Ron had passed so recently at that time, and those like Selina were only just stepping into their seniority as scholars and writers, descendants of Marjorie, Ron, Albert, and others from that generation of pioneers. The writing about Marjorie's influence during the 1960s and onwards at the University of the South Pacific by literary scholars like Subramani (1992) and Michelle Keown (2007) were unable to capture the breadth of Marjorie's influence at the respective times of publication. It is fitting that with this volume, we are now able to fully highlight the seminal contributions Marjorie made to the Pacific scholarly archive by making connections between her œuvre, the accomplishments of those she mentored, and the current and ongoing work that has been enabled because Marjorie did what she did, when she did it. As literary scholar, Alice Te Punga described,

> a great deal of [Marjorie's] scholarly work has been the often-invisible and ongoing labour of bringing others together and towards publication ... no account of Pacific intellectual history that excludes her contributions should be taken seriously. My students are used to hearing me describe her as the 'third musketeer' next to the more widely known and widely cited Wendt and Hau'ofa (Te Punga Somerville, 2022, p. 47).

Her influence on key Pacific thinkers over the last 50 years is undeniable, woven into the genesis of the new intellectualism that proliferated in the Pacific following the establishment of the University of the South Pacific and which began a new discourse on regionalism at the time. Marjorie played a significant part in shaping institutions, cross-regional collaborations, and the career defining moments of some of the Pacific's most treasured thinkers (see Professor Konai Helu Thaman, this volume) and has thus been a part of seeding new thinking from which the current generation now reaps rewards (Futter-Puati, 2023). Those authors in my honours thesis were influenced by the poets I discussed in my master's thesis, and that generation, all with their own entries in this volume, were themselves mentored, encouraged – and yes, often critiqued – by Marjorie. Unsurprisingly, there are many of those writers who have declared how necessary Marjorie was to the publication of their work for the first time and those statements are repeated throughout this volume. For all of us who work in Pacific Studies, or explore Pacific writing and history, for those of us who work against the tide in Cook Islands Studies and related fields, Marjorie's work permeates many of the institutional walls that shelter us in locations like Rarotonga, Fiji, and Auckland. Marjorie Crocombe is indeed an intellectual ancestor that so many of us choose.

## Marjorie in the archive

My peers and I, those who have been trained in the humanities as Pacific historians and literary specialists, Pacific philosophers, and language experts, spend so much of our time in the archives these days. We foreground Indigenous knowledges and methodologies in our scholarly practice, undertaking archival research where we are deeply aware of our sensory pallet. What does the archive smell like? What does it look like? How does it make us feel? (Ieremia-Allan, 2023). We are now able to bring the relatively novel skill-set of Indigenous language skills to our research practice, something the previous generation of mostly papa'ā scholars were not able to do in large number. Such skills are now increasingly used in uncovering, analysing, and sharing written histories that have largely been untouched (Royal Society: Te Apārangi, 2020). Such a practice is a comparatively new one amongst scholars and historians in the Pacific region, but this work is by no means pioneering.

When Marjorie published work on the Māori missionaries Ta'unga and Maretu, the translation, annotation, and editorial work was praised by reviewers and key historians of the time (Daws, 1969; Elkin, 1969; Gosselin, 1970). Publishing on missionaries and colonist discovery beginning with the book *They Came for Sandalwood* (1964), such titles demonstrate Marjorie's linguistic skill as a translator of the Rarotongan language to English. It also shows her scholarly rigor, demonstrated in the extensive annotation and editorial labour required for the coherence of the narratives that make up titles like *Cannibals and converts: radical change in the Cook Islands* (1983) and *The works of Ta'unga* (1968). University and research networks across the region have persistently called out for more Indigenous linguistic expertise for analytical work in the archive over the last 20 years. Moreover, the slow, careful, and methodical work of archive practice is increasingly deprioritised in research funding environments that are now driven by urgent research agendas that work to address current crises like climate change and health-related issues, rather than the plodding work of the historical repository. Marjorie's achievements with these titles, then, were pioneering for Indigenous Pacific women academics and her work is often looked to by current scholars like Ieremia-Allan and Te Punga Somerville as they continue the scholarly exploration of old texts left by Indigenous ancestors.

It is characteristic of Marjorie that many of her published works, found in libraries and archives across the region, are not only carefully researched works but also composed with strategic purpose in mind. Marjorie's legacy, therefore, is not so much considered by way of her solitary achievements and solo publications (though there are many celebrated in this volume) but by the ways the tone of her composition was aimed at a generation beyond her. The title for this article was taken from a dedication that Marjorie wrote at the beginning of her book *Two Hundred Changing Years* (1962). This title has become important to current conversations by scholars exploring the constitutional and cultural impact of New Zealand's imperialism in the Pacific. As far as I am aware, it is the only book of its kind, an education resource for New Zealand school children and an age-appropriate reader that tells an abbreviated version of Polynesian and colonial settlement on the islands of New Zealand's past colonies, the Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau. Though I am not privy to the details surrounding the genesis of the book, one thing is clear: Marjorie was critically aware of the Cook Islands' complex colonial history and was thinking carefully about cognate colonial experience and the lateral solidarities at play within New Zealand's imperial and colonial project. As ever, Marjorie's critical gaze was always looking at the potential relationalities at work regionally, and this resonates strongly with research being undertaken by Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau descendants who are investigating futurity for their respective peoples now. The fact that Marjorie composed a reader for future generations knowing how important this specific history would be to their sovereignty shows how cutting edge her thinking was, and how much intellectual room her work holds for my generation now.

In her dedication at the beginning of *Two Hundred Changing Years*, Marjorie writes, "Dedicated To You, The Children of Polynesia, That we may be proud of our Heritage" (1962). It was one of several dedications that she committed to future generations of Pacific scholars and students across her œuvre, all of which challenge that future generation to continue with the scholarly work she began. This indicates the kind of long and strategic gaze Marjorie had for scholarly work, history, and the archive. It is one of the archival hints that suggested to me the power of her dreaming and her hopes for the future. Right up to her final project on the introduction of *The Journal of Pacific History's* 2022 special issue on the Cook Islands Christian Church, Marjorie continued to implore a focus on deepening the capacity of Indigenous scholarship. She wrote,

> I trust that this [issue] will serve as an inspiration for further research into this important period of Pacific history, particularly by Cook Islanders in their own language. I would encourage senior historians to be available to mentor our junior historians, particularly our junior Indigenous historians, so that the discipline continues to thrive and play an ever more important role in society's understanding of itself. I hope that this research will soon be incorporated into the Cook Islands' education curriculum to promote pride in and greater understanding by young Cook Islanders in those who have gone before them so that they can draw important lessons for our future (Crocombe, 2022, p. 127).

Though there has certainly been an increase (albeit slow) in the number of Indigenous Pacific scholars we now see with doctoral degrees and institutional positions across different universities within, and at the edges of, the region, there remains a need for more Indigenous thinkers, particularly from Marjorie's much-loved Cook Islands community. Marjorie's persistent encouragement of Pacific scholars and writers was impressively consistent throughout her career, and it marks one of the most resonant aspects of her legacy: Marjorie Crocombe was always looking forward but more importantly, she was always *always* taking peers, relations, and students with her. Though she did this relationally, she also left plenty of signposts throughout the archive for us to follow in our research agendas.

## She who gets on with it

When Marjorie passed, a dear friend, colleague, and doctoral candidate, Wanda Ieremia-Allan, wrote a tribute to Marjorie in a social media post that was shared widely by Ieremia-Allan's intellectual and Pacific communities and included members of Marjorie's own family. Ieremia-Allan is a Sāmoan historian who is working on a study of the London Mission Society's newspaper, O Le Sulu Samoa. Her work is refreshing, compelling, and resonant with Marjorie's legacy of relational conduct and her meticulous approach to translation and practice in the archive. In her tribute, Ieremia-Allan referred to Marjorie's persistent promotion, editing, and profiling of Pacific literature well into her advancing years, and observed the astute way in which Marjorie celebrated and promoted the scholarly rigor of nineteenth century Cook Islands missionaries through her study and writing about the same (Crocombe, 1976a, 1976b, 1983). Te Punga Somerville's social media tribute similarly noted the important ways in which she saw Marjorie's influence increasingly in her research on Indigenous writing in the region in the early twentieth century. These are brief examples that show how Marjorie's challenges and the excellence of her practice as a scholar are being carefully noted by this new generation of Pacific scholars and an example that many of us now follow.

For me personally, Marjorie's significant contributions to literature regionally are not as important as the contributions she made to collecting, publishing, and supporting the writing of Cook Islanders in the Cook Islands and abroad. I wrote my own tribute to Marjorie in 2022, devastated by the loss of someone I saw to be one of our most ferocious and intelligent leaders. My perspective remains to this day: I was often moved by her long gaze because it was a gaze beyond where many of us could see. She wrote fondly her dedications to future generations in her books like the one at the beginning of *Two Hundred Changing Years,* and I feel moved by those dedications. Her achievements, particularly her literary ones, are so impressive in the context of the region, and those achievements made it easy for me to trust in her vision, especially because her strategising, relational warmth, and persistence so often bore fruit. Sincerely, I hope that whatever challenges she wished for my generation to meet, that we achieve those. I hope that whatever destination she hoped for us to arrive at within our time, that we do so.

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## About the author

**Dr. Emma Ngakuravaru Powell** (Atiu/Mangaia) specializes in Pacific anglophone literatures, particularly writing and cultural traditions of the Cook Islands and Polynesia. She also researches genealogical practices of Cook Islanders and Polynesians with a view toward indigenous historiography, nationhood, and futurity. She is the Master of Indigenous Studies programme co-ordinator at Te Tumu, School of Māori, Pacific and Indigenous Studies and is the co-director of the Pacific Thought Network at Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka, University of Otago, 362 Leith Street, Dunedin North, Dunedin 9016, New Zealand.

# Marjorie Tua'inekore Tere Crocombe: Mother and Godmother of Pacific Islands Universities

RANDY THAMAN

I pay tribute to the deities, chiefs, and ancestors of Rarotonga and the Cook Islands and the family and friends of Marjie and Ron Crocombe, and ask forgiveness for any omissions or inaccuracies in this tribute to Marjorie Tua'inekore Tere Crocombe. Marjie was both mother and godmother of The University of the South Pacific (USP), arguably the most geographically widespread and unique university on Earth, a university which, for over 60 years, has served the unique educational, research, and creative needs of Pacific Islands peoples. USP's success has been, in no small part, due to Marjie's role as long-serving Director of USP Extension Services and co-founder of the South Pacific Creative Arts Society (SPCAS) and its journal, *Mana: A South Pacific Journal of Language and Literature*.

I am sincerely honoured to have been included, along with my wife Konai and Marjie's family and friends, in this celebration of the life of Marjorie Tua'inekore Tere Crocombe, who, to many of our generation of students, academics, and creative artists, was the founding mother who nurtured, and godmother who baptized, most of today's Pacific Islands' universities, campuses, and extension centres. These have, over the years, enabled, nurtured, and inspired generations of Pacific Islands' teachers, creative artists, academics, civil servants, and leaders to successfully honour our shared responsibility for the stewardship and enrichment of our Pacific Islands' communities, cultures, and environments. It is with great sadness, however, that this is the first time, during our many visits to Rarotonga, beginning in 1978, not to be met on arrival or farewelled on departure by Marjie. She never failed to be there to garland us, up to our ears, with fragrant *ei* crafted from *tiare* and *maire hei,* two of the Pacific's most sacred and fragrant plants. Along with other sacred and fragrant plants, these are known throughout most of Polynesia as *kakala* or its cognate, and these plants feature in many Pacific legends and have been a dominant focus of many of Konai's poems. The giving of leis or garlands made from such flowers and leaves is the ultimate Pacific Islands symbol of respect, friendship, love, acceptance, and devotion, traits that Marjie exhibited in abundance.

Marjie Crocombe was a bigger than life, in-your-face, you-see-what-you-get, strong-willed, and trustworthy person who worked tirelessly throughout most of her life, to support the education, careers and creative arts of Pacific peoples. From the time we first met in 1974, we could feel her vehement concern for the well-being of Pacific peoples, her commitment to their education, academic, creative, and professional advancement, and for her open-armed concern for Konai and I and many other USP newcomers. She and her husband Professor Ron Crocombe warmly welcomed us all, often in their home, to a still fledgling USP, at a time when most Pacific nations were embroiled in achieving independence, charting their own courses and writing their own histories, stories, poems, plays, and curricula and when most older Pacific Islanders, such as school teachers, had not had the opportunity to study 'overseas' or do a degree.

As a closely-knit team, Marjie and Ron did more than anyone else in USP's history to establish USP as a world-recognized university, for and run by Pacific Islanders. Ron was clearly the academic and research father and godfather of USP and known widely and affectionately as Papa Ron by our Cook Islands students and many others. Marjie was clearly the mother and godmother of USP, known to Cook Islanders as Mama Marjie or Auntie Marjie, responsible for the baptism of USP as a truly regional university through her pivotal role as Director of USP Extension Services and the eventual region-wide spread of a vibrant network of USP regional and subregional USP Extension Centres. Likewise, she is honored for her role, along with Albert Wendt, Subramani, Howard Van Trease, Jo Nacola, and others, in the establishment of the South Pacific Creative Arts Society in 1971, *the Mana Annual of creative writing* in 1973, and *Mana: A South Pacific Journal of Language and Literature* in 1976 – the main avenues or fora for creative writing and publishing by Pacific Islanders about their shared island and ocean cultures and experiences. The society, annuals, and journal were responsible for the creation of a large cadre of Pacific Islands writers, poets, creative artists, and academics, whose outputs remain a prominent living legacy of, and tribute to, Marjie Crocombe.

Marjie Crocombe was a legend in her own time. She was the Pacific's female John Wayne, not the Duke, but a bigger-than-life, strong-willed Polynesian duchess or cowgirl, who rode herd on, drove, nourished, whipped into shape, and promoted USP, our regional islands Extension Centres and their directors, lecturers. students, and local communities. Marjie was without ego and never blew her own horn. She never travelled business class or first cabin; she travelled on deck with 'her people' as she plied her trade, first throughout the Cook Islands and later throughout the Pacific Ocean. Her middle name Tere meant voyage or journey. Those responsible for naming her clearly envisioned that she would voyage far and wide, making her people proud; that she would have many destinations, disciples, and achievements; and that she would have a large role in navigating and charting the education and careers of so many Pacific people. Marjie was one of the most inclusive people I have ever worked with, a loyal friend, who was always there to greet and stand beside you. She accepted and showed respect for everyone, regardless of their social status, race, or gender, based solely on their commitment to teaching and learning, to their students, and to service to the region. She was far more concerned about serving the region and the people of her beloved Cook Islands than about titles and honours, although she was ultimately honoured with more honours than, perhaps, anyone in USP's history. Many of these honours were due to her role in developing distance education, in facilitating writing and other creative works, in promoting study of indigenous languages, and in researching the lives of Cook Islands pastors who undertook missions to Papua New Guinea and Sāmoa.

Interestingly, it was Ron and Marjie who, in 1973, 'recruited' Konai and me to USP, essentially alerting us of, and encouraging us to apply for, advertised job opportunities at USP. We immediately applied for those jobs, as we had dreamed of returning to the Pacific to teach at USP, after having stopped there briefly in early 1972 on our way from Tonga to California. In Suva, we had met up with some of our former Tonga High School students who had begun studies at USP's fledgling Laucala Bay Campus at the former Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) flying boat base (established in 1939 in the face of an impending Japanese invasion during World War II and formally closed in 1967, the year before USP was founded there). In short, Konai and I applied for the advertised positions Lecturer in Geography (Preliminary) and Lecturer in Geography

(Degree), respectively, despite both of us having interesting jobs that we enjoyed at the University of California at Santa Barbara. There we both worked in the Geography Remote Sensing Unit to develop systems for monitoring the health of the Earth's terrestrial and marine resources on Gemini and Apollo Satellite imagery – seemingly a perfect fit for two geographers on the rise! However, we were both offered USP's advertised lecturer positions, decisions which Marjie and Ron were probably party to, as their driven goal had long been the 'de-expatriate-ization' of USP. Konai, who was among the first ever Tongan BA graduates in Geography from Auckland University, was the main target of their efforts. This suspicion was borne out, when we went to the then Registrar Steven Parrot to sign our contracts, at which time Konai was offered a 3-year contract, and I was offered a 1-year written contract, the renewal of which was contingent on Konai remaining at USP – a contract the likes of which no one had previously heard. I accepted without concern. Needless to say, the rest is history. I was happy enough just being there to work in the region with Konai, Marjie, Ron, and other committed early USP staff members and to teach Pacific Islands students, many of whom Marjie and Ron were also largely responsible for headhunting, recruiting, nurturing, mothering, and fathering. Many of them became regionally and/or world renowned academics, teachers, writers, poets, cultural artists, and scientists, including Albert Wendt, Konai Helu Thaman, Asesela Ravuvu, Howard Van Trease, Kauraka Kauraka, Terepa'i Moetaua, John and Ina Herrmann, Helen Framheim, Makiuti Tongia, and Teinakore Bishop. Many became educational and Pacific Studies icons.

Of paramount importance was the role that Marjie played as Head of USP Extension Services, which she clearly put on the map, along with the Open University, as one of the most effective long-distance education systems. Ultimately, USP Campuses have been established in all 12 member countries, as well as satellites: Lautoka and Labasa Campuses and Savusavu Centre in Fiji; Savai'i Centre in Sāmoa; Gizo and Lata Centres in Solomon Islands; Fakaofo, Nukunonu, and Atafu Centres in Tokelau; Ha'apai and Vava'u Centres in Tonga; and Torba, Samna, Malampa, and Tafea Centres in Vanuatu. Thus, USP became a truly regional educational institution with, frankly, Marjie and Ron being as much institutions as the institution itself. Particularly notable was the role Marjie played in keeping the USP satellite communications network open to our Pacific Islands regional centres as the only channels of communication to the outside world during Fiji's infamous 1987 coup. Led by Fiji's current Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka, the Fiji Military Forces closed down and militarised Fiji's International Telecommunications network (Fintel), thus cutting off all news about the coup, which had unleashed "a wave of violence upon Fiji's people", which included house invasions, phone tapping, assaults, burglaries, vandalism, arson, imprisonment and torture (Robertson and Tamanisau 2012). The USP Extension Services satellite network was until its discovery – and after many of our regional students had been repatriated to their home countries – the only communication to the region and outside world and our USP member countries.

Apart from the dominant leadership roles Marjie and Ron played in facilitating aspiring Pacific Islands academics, writers, and artists, and solidifying USP's reputation as 'The Pacific Islands University', they were also legendary for their hospitality, welcoming, and open-door policy to all their Pacific children (and grandchildren) as well as their partners or spouses who were, sometimes, *vavalagi, palangi,* or *papa'a* (white persons). The door of their seemingly specially designed island-like house was almost perpetually open night and day to Pacific Islands students, academics, and travellers. The living-room floor was a room-wide mosaic of the Pacific Islands, which emphasised connectedness among Pacific peoples. Many of the visitors were middle-aged in-service experienced teachers or civil servants, who were being afforded their first chance to study ‘overseas’ and to earn a degree at their own regional Pacific Islands university. The most important part of their education was probably the chance to establish lasting friendships and alliances with their fellow, future Pacific Islands teachers, writers, artists, scientists, and leaders from USP’s 12 island member states, cadres of which were fondly referred to as “the USP Mafia”, because of the glue they provided and the flags they flew in regional and international organisations and fora. Many of these relationships were initiated or fostered by Marjie and Ron, who continued to support and nurture us throughout our lives.

To conclude, I express my sincere gratitude for being included in this celebration of the extraordinary life of our dear friend, the late Marjorie Tua'inekore Tere Crocombe, who was clearly both mother and godmother of The University of the South Pacific and its region-wide system of USP Campuses, Centres, and Subcentres in USP’s 12 member countries of Melanesia, Polynesia, and Micronesia. Arguably the most geographically widespread and unique university on Earth, it is a university which, for over 60 years, has served the unique educational, research, and creative needs of Pacific Islands’ peoples. This vibrant university stands as Marjie Crocombe’s living legacy to the Pacific Region, a legacy that will hopefully continue to stand the test of time.

Meitaki Ma'ata and Aere Ra, Marjie.

## About the author

**Randolph Robert (“Randy”) Thaman,** Emeritus Professor of Pacific Islands Biogeography, taught and mentored students at The University of the South Pacific, Laucala Campus for 46 years. He worked with and conducted research with local and indigenous students and communities in 18 Pacific Islands countries and territories. With local and indigenous collaborators, he has co-authored books, articles, and technical papers on traditional agriculture and agroforestry, forestry, medicinal plants, Pacific floras, impacts of marine conservation, traditional fisheries knowledge, island biodiversity, and invasive alien species. He was awarded an Honorary Membership of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) at the 2012 Korea Congress. In 2013, he was a recipient of the Inaugural Pacific Islands Environment Leadership Lifetime Achievement award.

## Glossary

| | |
|---|---|
| 'aere ra | goodbye. |
| ei | garland. |
| kakala | fragrant and sacred plant; its leaves, flowers, or fruit are used to make garlands and perfume coconut oil. |
| lei | garland. |
| maire hei | head garland made from maire (Allyxia stellata). |
| meitaki ma'ata | thank you very much.. |
| palangi | white person. |
| papa‘a | white person. |
| tiare | Tahitian gardenia (Gardenia taitensis). |
| vavalagi | white person. |

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*Marjorie with John and Ina Herrmann, USP graduation, Rarotonga 2005*

# Te Taunga Nui: Dr. Marjorie Tua'inekore Tere Crocombe; Te Tivaivai o Atiu Nui Maruarua

UPOKOINA HERRMANN

## Akatuera'anga

*Taku Manu Nui, taku manu rai*
*Kua ikuiku porokipoki te tama ki te metua,*
*ko au ka riro ke.*
*Taku Manu nui, taku manu rai,*
*taku manu e rere taitiiti*
*ki tonga, ki tokerau*
*oki mai, oki mai.*

Symbolism features in all cultures of the world, being more pronounced in some, especially indigenous, cultures. Such symbolism, in all its simplicity and complexity, signifies and extrapolates the relationships and connections of a people with their natural surroundings and the cosmos. I have used the symbols of the bird, specifically the tavake (red-tailed tropic bird) and the tivaivai (quilt) to exemplify the subject of this essay: Dr. Marjorie Tua'inekore Tere Crocombe (Doctor of Literature): the Ta'unga Nui o Atiu Nui Maruarua.

I have introduced Marjie, as she was fondly known throughout the Cook Islands, through the Atiuan lament of a son to a father, *Taku Manu Nui Taku Manu Rai.* The essence of the lament is that people will leave the island in search of new horizons, but they will return. I have not translated the lament in case I do injustice or show disrespect to its essence and spirit. The original name of the island of Atiu is Enuamanu, the land of the birds. In the early days, the island hummed with the music of sea birds and land birds against the backdrop of ocean, makatea (uplifted coral), native scrub, and trees. With the gradual human settlement of Atiu, its offshore island of Takutea, 20 kilometres north-west, became a bird and marine haven. Due in part to Marjie and Ron Crocombe's advocacy, Takutea was designated a Marine and Bird Sanctuary under the auspices of the 'Ui Ariki (high chief Ngamaru Ariki, Rongomatane Ariki, and Parua Ariki) and the Atiu Island Trust.

The tavake is a fitting image for Marjie in her pursuits in life. The tavake, also called bo'sun bird because its call mimics a boatswain's whistle, is a bird sacred to Atiuans. When in flight, it emanates supremacy, regality, serenity, and beauty. Besides Takutea, it inhabits Suwarrow in the northern Cook Islands. In times of trouble, the urgency and number of its flights and the constant circling of Atiu forewarn the people of the onset of cyclonic weather. At a young age, Marjie took flight to a foreign land (Aotearoa New Zealand) in pursuit of education. Her scholastic aptitude made her one of the most successful scholars from the Cook Islands. She returned highly educated and determined to serve her country, the Cook Islands. Her flights also took her to all corners of the Pacific and other parts of the world. As we tell our stories in this Festschrift, the gift of Marjie to Atiu, to the Cook Islands, to the Pacific Islands, and beyond the Pacific, is evident and, indeed, immeasurable.

Tivaivai is an art performed by women since the missionary era when they learned to stitch pieces of cloth together to create patchwork quilts. Under the tutelage of the expert Ta'unga o te Tivaivai, women of the Cook Islands have created their own unique tivaivai styles. Tivaivai collections are family heirlooms passed from generation to generation. They are gifted on such special occasions as investiture ceremonies, weddings, and birthdays and given to dignitaries and honored guests. Tivaivai is the embodiment of the principles of ta'unga (leadership), the process (the concept, design, stitching, blessing, and gifting), unity, and pange (cooperation), and of the articulation of artistic and aesthetic thoughts. The term ta'unga befits someone with expert knowledge and skills in a particular art form. I use ta'unga to acknowledge Marjie's expertise in the art of writing. The methodology she applied in researching and capturing, in print, the oral traditions and customs, history, knowledge, and world-views of the people of Atiu resonates with the practices of a ta'unga o te tivaivai.

There are three types of quilts common in the Cook Islands –

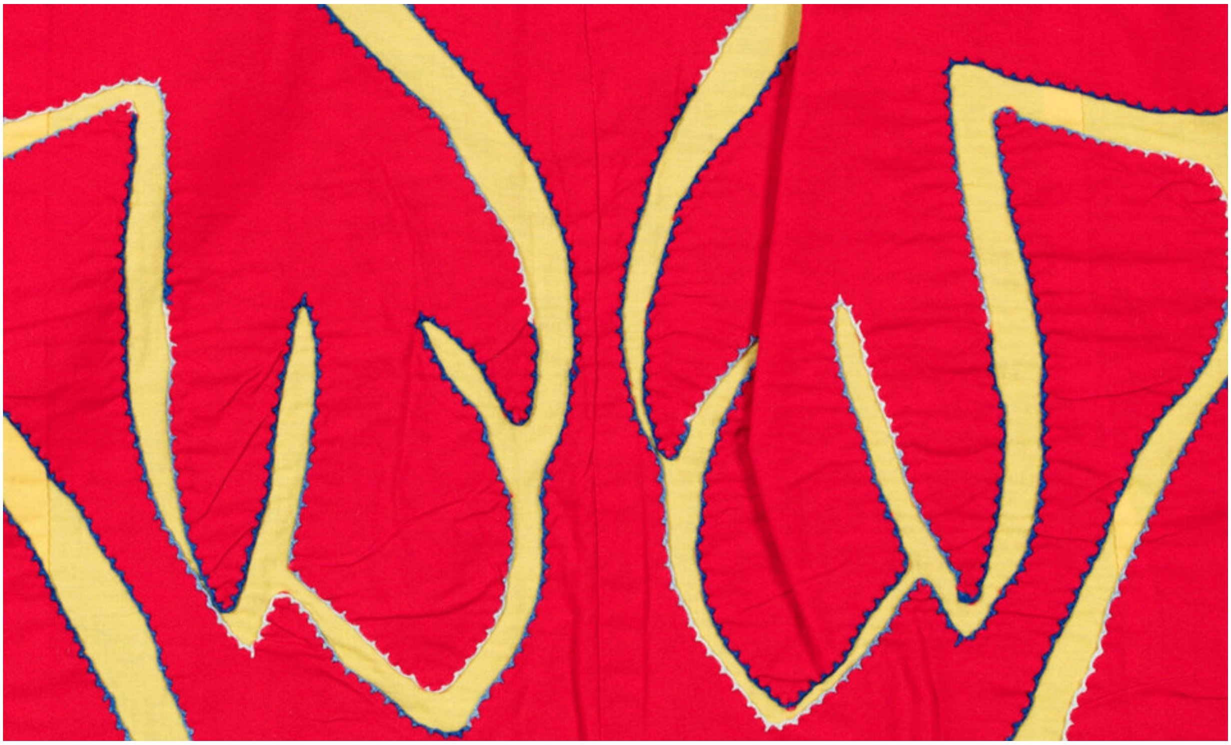
*Tivaivai manu* is one piece of cloth cut into a design and appliquéd whole onto backing;
*Tivaivai tātaura* is appliquéd in pieces and embroidered onto backing; and
*Tivaivai taorei* is patchwork, such as in paka onu (hexagons) or squares.

Pange is a process where women work in groups to stitch the tivaivai. Each village has its own pange. This concept embodies unity, cooperation, and expediency in completing the tivaivai within a specified timeframe. It allows all women to own a tivaivai made by the group before they sew the next tivaivai. Similarly, Marjie and Ron formed groups so writers would encourage one another.

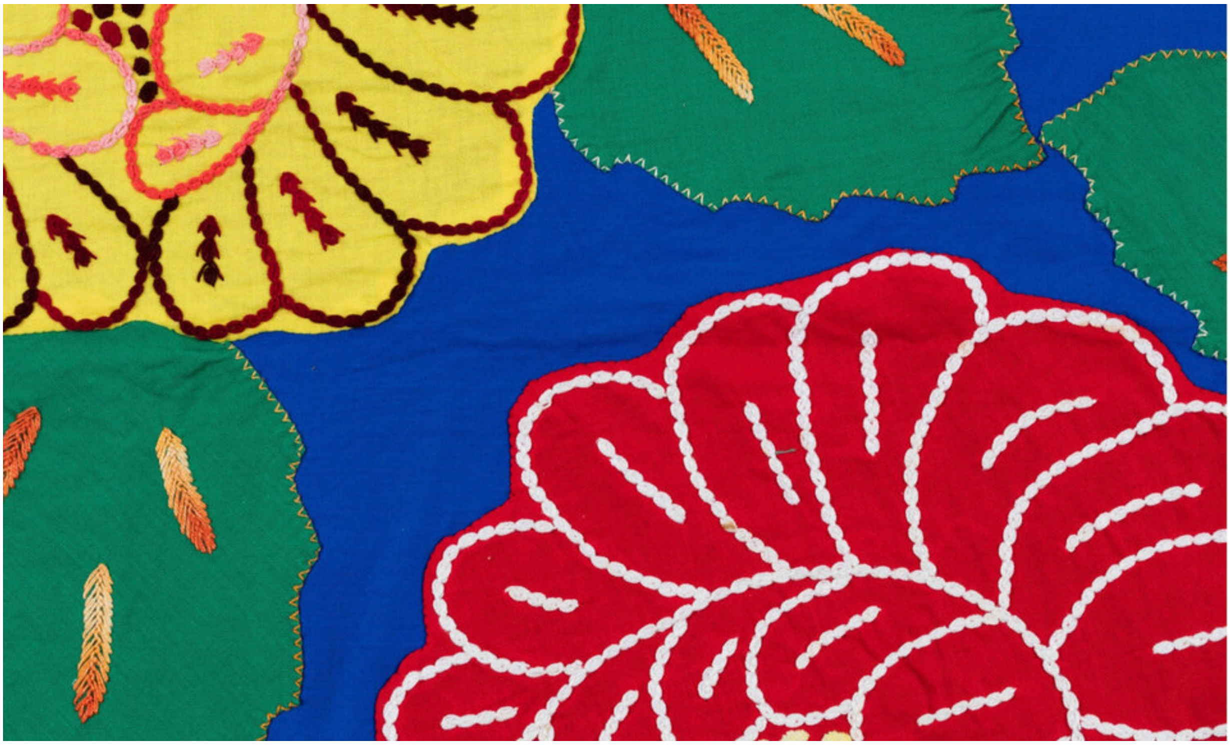
## A picture paints a thousand words

This portrait of Marjie *(frontispiece)* is a depiction of who she is, where she comes from, where she went, what she did, and how she inspired others. In this portrait, Marjie is cloaked as an academic, scholar, intellectual, historian, researcher, writer, mentor. Within this academic kaleidoscope, Marjie remains, at heart, a Cook Islander, deeply rooted in her heritage and in the culture and history of her people, and with a conviction to engage Cook Islanders to write their own histories and stories. Like the tavake, Marjie soared supreme, regal, serene, stern, disciplined, and beautiful in her engagement in the art of writing. She shot straight, too, when a situation merited it. She was a loving and dedicated mother, wife, friend, and colleague to many.

In the Atiu context, Marjie would have been cloaked in the chiefly and traditional attire of the ariki, embodying the history, culture, language, and spirituality of the Atiu community. The attire would be the work of the ta'unga with tasks allotted to specialists in their field. The completed attire would consist of the tunic, cloak, belt, shoes, fan, necklace, and momore, a spear made specifically for the ariki, which symbolized protection against invasion from other



*(Above) Detail of a tivaivai manu from Mitiaro (artist unkown), dated 1984 and acquired by the Auckland Museum in 1996 (accession no.1996.224.2, photo - Jennifer Carol); (below) detail of a tivaivai tātaura by Tou Pukeiti, acquired by the Auckland Museum in 2001 (accession no.2001.12.23, photo - Jennifer Carol).*



islands, and is currently used to symbolize an ariki's responsibility to her/his tribe. These are all made from local fibres and materials. For example, anga (tapa clothing) was made traditionally from the bark of aute (paper mulberry) bushes and kuru (breadfruit) trees, and currently from mati (dye fig) bark and ava (banyan) roots. The head piece, the centre piece, would have the tailfeathers of the tavake to signify the supremacy, regality, serenity, and beauty of the ariki.

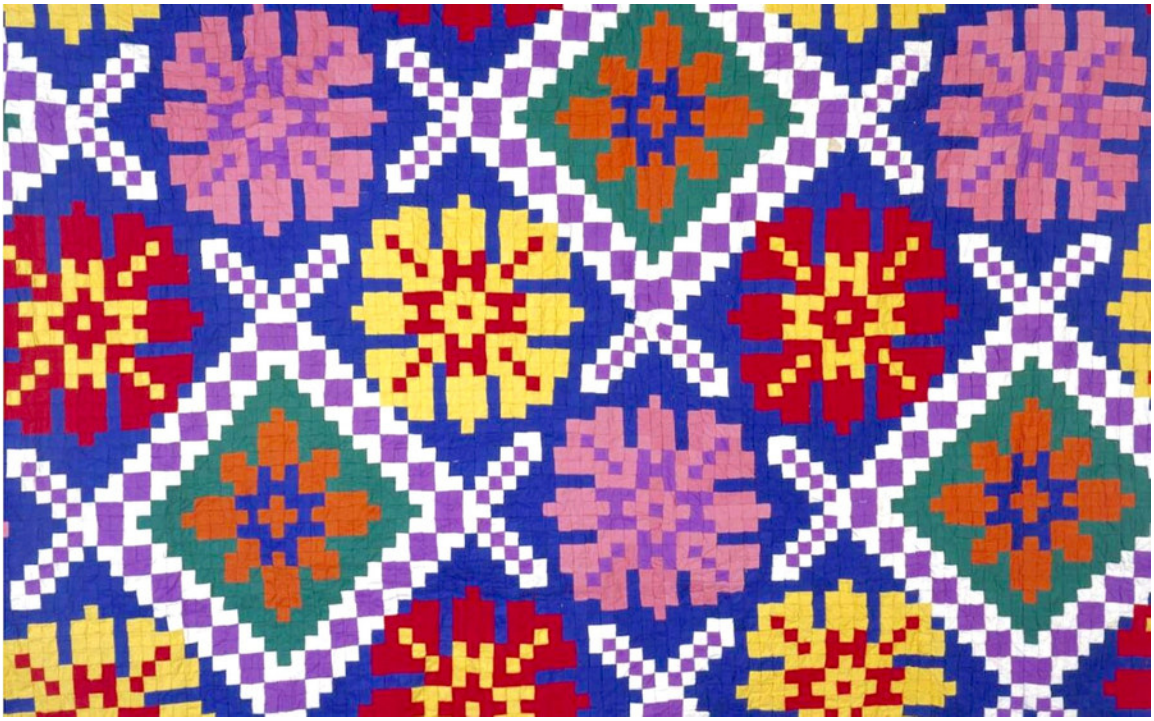
The Atiu tivaivai is stitched in history, culture, language, spirituality, and mindsets of the people of the island of Atiu. The Atiu tivaivai is the embodiment of the above-mentioned elements, creatively imagined and pulsating with the beat and rhythm of the heart and spirituality of its people. The women of Atiu have been champion creators of the tivaivai as they have tirelessly and constantly stitched in the spirit of love, songs, and storytelling. At the centre of all these activities are two significant pieces of the tivaivai, Marjie and Ron Crocombe.

## Marjie and the Atiu connection

Marjie (née Hosking) had Atiu lineage which came through her maternal grandmother from the Ngamaru Ariki with links to the Rongomatane matakeinanga (tribe). That grandmother was known by three names on Atiu: Moina Vai, Louisa, and Ngapoe – three names because it is customary on Atiu for a name to be given by the husband's family on the wedding day, and for a name to be given if a loved one dies. A matakeinanga has mata'iapo (subchiefs) and rangatira (assistants) among its people.

Ron's first connection with Atiu occurred when, in 1957, at the age of 27 years, he was appointed as New Zealand's Acting Resident Agent on the island. During his tenure, Ron's singular focus was to be the best facilitator of educational opportunities for the Atiuan people (Tata Crocombe, pers. com.). While resident, Ron developed a very special friendship with Tetupu Maka Kea, the reigning Rongomatane Ariki of Atiu at the time. Without consulting Ron, Rongomatane Ariki announced to his matakeinanga that he would name Ron's first-born child.

Ron met Marjie on Rarotonga, and they married. Ron's work took them to Sāmoa, where their first child – a son – was born in 1960. Rongomatane Ariki was one of the first people to know. Although in much of the Cook Islands, it is customary for the father to name his first son, the naming of a first son on Atiu is within the ariki's domain. With humility and respect, Ron honoured the promise of Tetupu Maka Kea to name the child. Their son was named Taturoanui O Taki Atiu Graham Crocombe. Taturoanui (Tata) O Taki Atiu was the original name of the matakeinanga (village) of Rongomatane, and Graham was the name of one of Ron and Marjie's dear friends, David Graham. It has also become customary for names to be shortened, for a number of reasons, and Taturoanui became Tata. The presentation of gifts on the birth of the child included tivaivai, tapa clothing, and specific artifacts fit for a chief. This connection affirmed the Crocombe and Atiu relationship, and thus began a lifelong commitment to, and investment in, the island of Aitu and its people by the Crocombes. In recent decades, Tata has been behind every major project undertaken by the people of Atiu. In a sense, Atiu people have seen Tata as the Atiu warrior of modern times.



*(Above) Detail of a tivaivai taorei, by Mama Kaitamaki, Aitutaki, date 1969, acquired by Auckland Museum 1996 (accession no. 1996.224.1, photo - Auckland Museum); (below) a tivaivai ta'unga, the late Mrs. Vereara Maeva-Taripo (left), with members of her tivaivai group, including Mereana Hutchinson (centre).*

The Crocombes had two more children: Kevin Teremoana born in Australia and Narida Hinano born in Papua New Guinea. Despite moving beyond the Cook Islands, Ron and Marjie remained connected with and interested in Atiu. Over the years, they dedicated much of their time to helping the people of Atiu write their own stories in their own voices. The Crocombes and their offspring are held in high esteem by the people of Atiu. The quote "The shadow of Ikurangi will disappear, but the rock will remain", used by Paiere Mokoroa (2013: 477) in his tribute to Papa Ron Crocombe, is, therefore, an equally appropriate metaphor to illustrate the Crocombes and their Atiu connection. The rock is that called Kuekue, whose shadow will last forever (see also Large 1913: 74), stands for Marjie and Ron and all their contributions to Atiu and its people. The Rock will continue to inspire generations of the Atiu people, wherever they may be in the world, to be bold and courageous and to tell their own histories and stories.

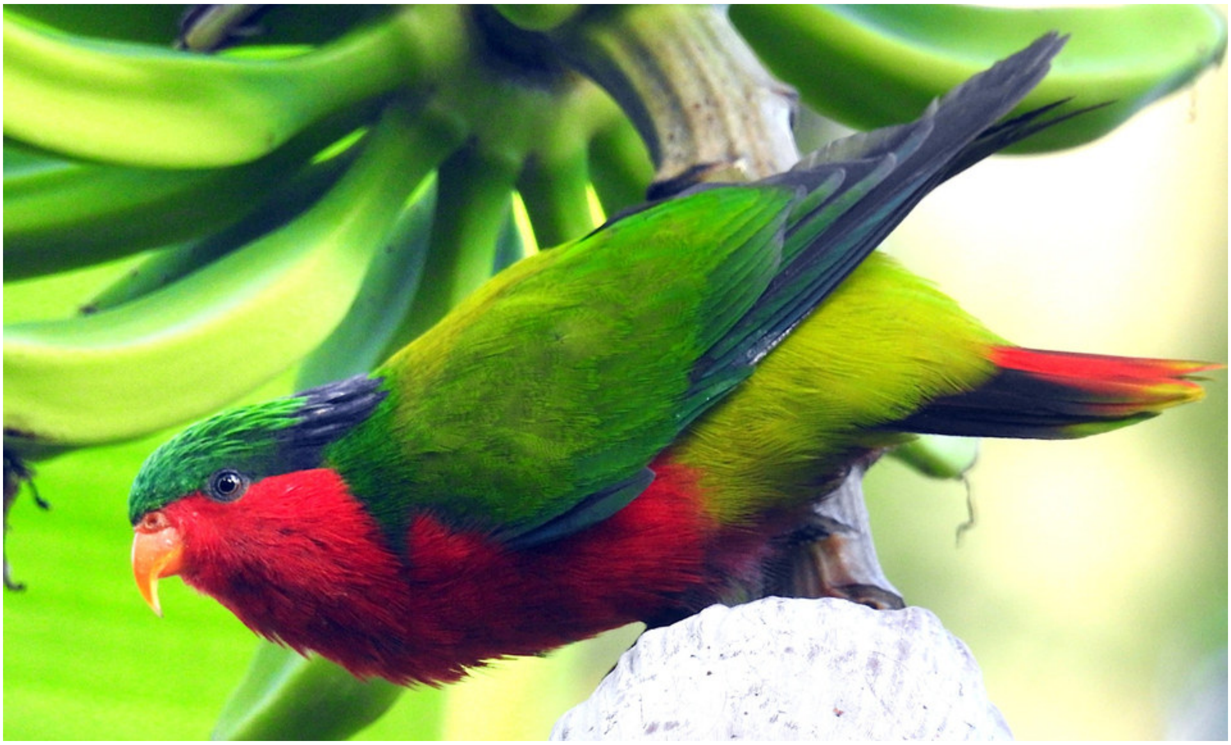
## The Atiu Mindset

The people of the island of Atiu like to be first at anything and everything. With pride and humility, and whatever the cost, they will strive to be first. They take great pride in being the first island of the Cook Islands to publish a book, *Atiu: An Island Community* (Kautai et al., 1984), which the Crocombes helped them to write (see below). Other publications that followed included *Atiu Through European Eyes: A Selection of Historical Documents 1777-1967* (Campbell 1982).

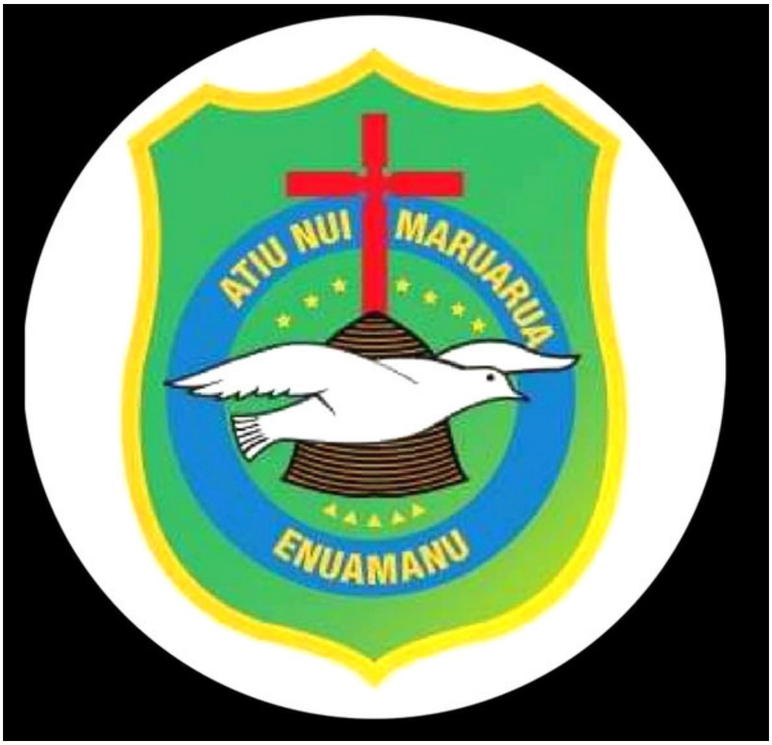
Atiuans also constructed the first hostel on Rarotonga: Atiu Nui Maruarua III, a home away from home for the Atiu people. They had built Atiu Nui Maruarua I on Atiu and Atiu Nui Maruarua II on Tahiti. They established Atiu Nui Maruarua IV in Aotearoa. Perhaps, a fifth hall to be built in Australia is a work in progress.

One might ask, Why Tahiti? Atiu is the only Cook Islands community to have legal ownership of land in Tahiti, known as the Patutoa I o te Atiu. This land was mortgaged through real estate on 13 July 1868, cost estimated at 12,000 francs, and signed, on one hand, by Mr. T. Hall and Mr. Denouves, Director of the Registration Office on Tahiti and signed, on the other hand, by Pauro a Pauro, Paura a Nurau, and Mana a Tiaputa – all three had been born on Atiu but lived in Papeete at the time. These three were the first Atiuans to settle on Tahiti, and they pioneered an arrangement that allowed people of Atiu to establish their own community there. Under the leadership of Ngamaru Ariki in 1895, the people of Atiu purchased a ship to export copra. They named it *Ngamaru Ariki,* and the Ariki himself, whose navigational skills were excellent, captained it. Generations have kept the connection, and Atiu Nui Maruarua II was built to accommodate all Atiuans travelling to Tahiti.

In the past, kura (*Vini kuhlii,* parakeets) had ranged throughout southern Polynesia, but ship rats (*Rattus rattus*) had destroyed many populations. This red-listed endangered species has been protected under CITES since 1981. Gerald McCormack and Judith Kunzle had surveyed the kura's habitat on Rimatara in French Polynesia in 1992. With a worldwide coalition of support, they returned there in 2000, 2006, and 2007 with Ada Rongomatane Ariki to make arrangements with the local community for birds to be taken to Atiu, which was free of *Rattus rattus.* When 27 birds finally arrived, it was a proud and historic moment for the people of Atiu. The kura population has increased to about one thousand, and these exquisitely coloured tiny birds have



*Kura, Rimatara parakeet, Vini kuhlii, (photo - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuhl%27s_lorikeet); (below) Atiu's crest of identity.*


ATIU NUI MARUARUA
ENUAMANU

become a tourist attraction (Gerald McCormack, pers. com., 26 August 2023). Thus, the relationship between Atiu and French Polynesia remains current and strong.

Another first was hosting the 33rd Cook Islands Christian Church General Assembly in 2019. Historically, this assembly had been held on Rarotonga, understandably for logistical reasons. Nevertheless, Atiu persisted, gained approval, and shifted the boundary. In July 2023, Atiu, Mitiaro, and Mauke (the Ngaputoru group) celebrated 200 years since the arrival of Christianity. Initially introduced on 17 July 1823, Christianity was accepted by Rongomatane Ariki Ngakaara Kea. That very month, he invited Mitiaro and Mauke to also accept Christianity. For Marjie, such shared events and projects presented rich opportunities for writing.

## The crest of identity

The spirit of the people of Atiu is exemplified in its crest of identity. Atiu is the only island with a crest of identity. One of Atiu's pioneer and prominent leaders, the Honorable Vainerere Tangatapoto, designed the crest. It embraced symbols of Christianity (the Cross) placed at the top to signify the omnipotence of God above all else: King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The chiefs and their matakeinanga are represented by the seven stars: three paramount ariki and four mata'iapo (sub-chiefs). The sennit helmet signifies unity of Christianity, customs, and traditions. The tavake signifies the spirit of independence and determination. The five triangles represent the five villages of Ngatiarua, Tengatangi, Mapumai, Areora, and Teenui. The triangle shape was used as a military formation by the Atiu warriors when at war in the olden days. The circle stands for unity of people in order to cultivate strength, progress, and prosperity. The colour blue represents the ocean and the connection of Atiu to the rest of the world and its wealth of opportunities. The green background of the circle and shield indicates the rich soil of Atiu that sustains the life of the people. The shield confirms the faith and trust that the people have in God Almighty.

## Marjie and waves of writers

It is this spirit of unity and determination that Marjie ignited among the leaders of Atiu which culminated in the publication of their first book, *Atiu: An Island Community* (Kautai et al., 1984). Such leaders as Vainerere Tangatapoto, Tangata Simiona, Paiere Mokoroa, Bill Evaroa, Alistair Campbell, and Upokoina Teiotu contributed. Many were teachers by profession. Vainerere Tangatapoto and Tangata Simiona were politicians. Paiere Mokoroa and Upokoina Teiotu continued to write and publish until their deaths. Marjie edited their manuscripts, some of which might still be in Marjie's folders. Ngatupuna Kautai, Tane Ra Touna, Kura Takaiti Malcolm, and Terepai Tanga were some of the women teachers in this wave of writing. Over time, authors translated their chapters into the Atiuan language, and *Atiu: E Enua E Tona Iti Tangata* was published (Kautai et al., 1993).

Marjie also invested in the talents of the young students. She facilitated a creative writing project with the students of Enuamanu School, the only school on Atiu with students from preschool to year 13. In addition to academic work, the school facilitates training in the trades through the Cook Islands Training Institute of Rarotonga. She and others took students to the island of Takutea. The publication of *Takutea* (Kapao et al., 2008), a collection of poetry and stories, captured the creativity that emanated from within the students given the opportunity and the motivation. The people of Atiu will continue to honour the legacy of Marjie through engagement in various forms of writing and performing arts. The Ron Crocombe Education Trust was established to support, with finance and resources, the education of senior students from Enuamanu School.

Due to space considerations, a complete list of publications by Atiu people has not been cited in this paper. Numerous songs have been composed and sung by the young people of Atiu, and a common theme throughout is a celebration of Atiu Island and its people of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Suffice to say, both Ron and Marjie were behind every one of these compositions.

In concluding, some words from Marjorie towards the end of her time, sum up, for me, the person she was. She asked me what I thought of the proposal from the USP Cook Islands Campus to set up a Marjorie Crocombe wing at the USP library in honour and celebration of her works and achievements. Her thoughts, of course, were straight to the point. She said, "Those works also belong to Ron and all the other academics I have worked with. But, most importantly, they belong to the people of the Cook Islands, (the people of Atiu, of course) and the people of the Pacific; past, present and those yet to be. End of story." Inspiring words indeed from this Ta'unga Nui of Atiu, of the Cook Islands, and of the wider Pacific Ocean for all of us to contemplate, and, in particular, for the people of Atiu to keep stirring the embers and awakening the fires of writing and of creativity within its people. The USP Cook Islands Campus named the library wing as "The Ron and Marjie Crocombe Collection". The lyrics in John Herrmann's (1987) composition 'Tuatau…' encourage all Cook Islands' people to hold on to their language and culture, to write their own histories, and to tell their stories in their own voices.

As for Marjie Crocombe's Pacific tivaivai, many of the presenters at the Festschrift conference have been reminiscing, sewing, and stitching to the beat and rhythm of the Pacific Ocean. The song 'Poe Tiare Oki Koe Noku…' was a favourite of Ron and Marjie's. It is not only about their love for each other, their children, and their families, but also reflects their love for the Cook Islands and Te Moana Nui o Kiva (Pacific Ocean). At the Festschrift conference, one of our own musicians Tina Koronui Herman, who hails from Atiu and Manihiki, sang this song. For now, E moe ra e Marjie, e takoto ki te paepae o to poe tiare tumanava ko Papa Ron – Sleep gently Marjie next to your beloved and treasured Papa Ron. Iekoko ….

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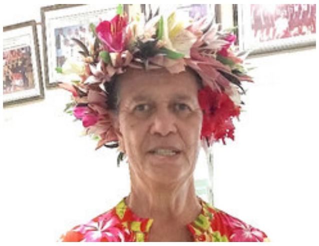

**Upokoina (Ina) Herrmann** served in education in the Cook Islands for over 40 years. She taught English in secondary school and became head of the English department. She took a post as audit and quality assurance officer with the Ministry of Education. After a year, she became director of curriculum development, implementation and advisory support. Her final appointment was as director of learning and teaching with a focus on providing quality learning programmes for all learners, a position she held until March 2019. Trained at Dunedin Teachers College, she earned a New Zealand Trained Teacher Certificate. She earned a BA in Education and English from the University of the South Pacific, and a Masters in Teaching English as a Second Language from the University of Canberra, Australia. Currently, Ina is learning the art of tivaivai making, writing, enjoying her grandchildren and gardening.

# From a History of Creative Narration to a Future of Creative Writing

MAKIUTI TONGIA

I met Marjorie Crocombe for the first time more than 50 years ago at the University of the South Pacific (USP). I had not known her but had heard of her via her book, *They Came for Sandalwood.* It was used in Avarua Primary School, in social science classes of Forms 1 and 2. Every Cook Islands child at that age had read her book.

Later, Marjie became the mother figure and her husband Professor Ron Crocombe the father figure for Cook Islands students studying at USP. She was then working for USP, at the same time she was studying for a Master of Arts degree through the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG). Her MA dissertation was about a late Cook Islands 'orometua (teacher, pastor) called the Reverend Maretu Tua'ivi of Ngatangi'ia, Takitumu. He served as 'orometua in various islands of the Cook Islands. Using his diary written in Cook Islands Māori, Marjie was translating, editing, and annotating his biography so contemporary Cook Islanders and others would understand the context of his life and work. She allowed me at times to read his diary. The Māori grammar and spelling of Maretu's time had not yet been formalized. In adapting it to contemporary language, she had a task in joining words and sentences to make sense of the narrative. That was my first introduction to a primary source of Cook Islands Māori history. Later, she introduced me to the writings in Māori of another Cook Islands missionary called Ruatoka of Tamarua, Mangaia. He was a very close relative of mine, although I did not know that then.

Marjie also shared some contemporary writings in poetry and novels by Nigerian authors and Ulli Beier, who was teaching creative writing at UPNG at the time. Beier wrote novels about village life in Nigeria. Until I read Beier's fiction, I had never finished reading a single novel in English, but Beier wrote in simple English and portrayed traditional life in Nigerian villages that read almost like village life here in the Cook Islands during the 1950s and 1960s. The similarity of traditional lifestyles between two different countries thousands of miles apart caught my interest. Later, Marjie introduced me to Tok Pidgin (pidgin English) publications by UPNG students who had been inspired by Beier and whose work Beier helped to publish. The poetry and prose often had English translations, and the simple stories and verses of Papua New Guinea were culturally similar to some aspects of my home and life growing up on Rarotonga.

In 1974, Albert Wendt arrived to teach the first class in creative writing at USP. No doubt, Marjie had played a part in getting him to join our university. I was one of those first students in Albert’s class, along with Vilsoni Tausie Hereniko of Rotuma, Alefina Vuki of Fiji, and two other male students from Fiji. Vilsoni wrote plays while most of us focused on poetry.  A Fijian

*Pacific Writers Forum, East-West Center, August 1994; (left to right) Vilsoni Hereniko, Patricia Grace, Marjorie Crocombe, Haunani-Kay Trask, Nori Vagi Brash, Albert Wendt, Epeli Hau'ofa; (front) Sudesh Mishra and Victoria Kneubuhl*

*Marjorie as Director of Extension Services with participants at a 1980 Women Writers' workshop, Honiara* student Seri, whose stutter made understanding his speech difficult, wrote some powerful poems in English. He later completed his tertiary studies at Auckland University. There were eight students in that first creative writing class taught by Wendt, and all of us were closely tied to the South Pacific Creative Arts Society (SPCAS). At its helm, Marjie pushed for SPCAS to be independent of USP. She and her team kept it that way for decades.

In the early 1970s, Marjie had scored a deal with *Pacific Islands Monthly* (PIM). It was the only magazine that dealt with news from each country in our region. For that reason, it was very popular with students and the literate people of the Pacific. Although published in English, each issue of the magazine had many pictures about the people and life in various islands communities and cities, and the photographs appealed to many people who could not read English. PIM was already popular: expatriates and locals alike from throughout Oceania read it for its insiders' views. It was especially popular in the South Pacific. My father had been a subscriber to the magazine before I went to USP in 1972.

The deal with PIM was that SPCAS would provide short stories, poetry, and other creative writings for the magazine, and the magazine gave two pages to SPCAS in each issue. I do not know how Mama Marjie achieved that deal, but it worked well for the magazine, for aspiring writers, and for the new South Pacific Creative Arts Society.  That initiative introduced us to people throughout the region, and it sparked interest in Pacific writing. Marjie received poems and short stories largely from Melanesia and Micronesia while Polynesia provided mostly poetry and songs. Many writing contributions were from expatriates, but Marjorie prioritized materials from indigenous Polynesians. We young writers became published, and that magazine helped spread Pacific writing throughout the islands and the Pacific rim countries.

PIM promoted SPCAS creative writings for three years. With the seed money, SPCAS was able to initiate Mana Publications and the journal *Mana.*  I am thankful to Marjie for her tireless efforts in pushing for creative writing to be taught at USP and for PIM to broadcast our writing for three years. I am thankful for her vision and energy. She was working all the time. She basically dragged the whole Pacific onto the map of creative writing. She exuded confidence and determination, which rubbed off on many of us young writers. She showed the world that even Islanders could write stories and poems and compose songs and drama. Mana Publications brought joy to many new Pacific writers who saw their work published for the first time.

Marjie loved writing and loved even more the act of sharing that joy with others, keen to try their hands at the then white man's occupation. She made the trip adventurous, exciting, and most importantly, rewarding for Pacific writers who became published for the first time. She promised and delivered novelty and a sense of adventure for many Pacific writers from Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia.

In 1992, the Cook Islands hosted the South Pacific Festival of Arts, and Marjie decided to run a special Festival of Arts publication from participating countries. Preparing *Te Rau Maire* (1992) was one of the most exciting trips I ever took with her. It was the only publication of its kind in conjunction with the Festival of Arts. Halfway through the project, I took up a teaching post at Victoria University which co-published the book.

Older now, I understand more about what Marjie was on about back then. I am glad that she roped me in to join her and many others on that most exciting journey. She changed many people throughout the Pacific, where even spoken English was very limited when she began this journey. I feel privileged to have known her and to have watched her even without fully understanding the bigger picture. She committed herself to any task she started. I am happy that I worked with her, but I have been able to duplicate neither her focus nor her energy to complete projects that everyone said could not be done. She showed that nothing is impossible. She was a practitioner, not a talker. She was a leader, pushing herself and everyone else to keep paddling her vaka (canoe) of discoveries, even when the vaka became swamped.

Meitaki ma'ata Mama Marjie and Papa Ron Crocombe. Kua maka te aranui o te vaka purua, ia korua. You paved the way for all of us. By giving birth to Mana Publications, you turned a history of creative narration into a future of creative writing. Writers, readers, listeners, and viewers of the Pacific Islands are grateful.

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## About the author

**Makiuti Tongia** was educated at Tereora College on Rarotonga. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in sociology, Pacific history, and creative writing from the University of the South Pacific. Winning a Fulbright scholarship, he studied at Ohio State University and Western Kentucky University, earning a Master of Arts in Ethnology and Living Museums and later directed the Cook Islands National Museum. He has taught social science, creative writing, and Cook Islands Māori studies at Papa'aroa High School, Teachers' College, and Victoria University of Wellington. He served as President of the Cook Islands Democratic Party and Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, as well as on such boards as the Kopapa Reo Māori Language Commission, Deep Sea Minerals Authority, and Social Impact Fund. His poetry collections include *Korero* (1977, Mana Publications, Suva), *Purua* (1980, Purua and Teachers' College, Rarotonga), and *Tipani* (1991, Ministry of Cultural Development, Rarotonga). He also wrote *Learning Rarotonga Maori: how to speak in ordinary situations* (1991, Ministry of Cultural Development, Rarotonga).

# My Mafuta Faatasi with Marjie
## *My Time Together with Marjie*

PEGGY FAIRBAIRN-DUNLOP

## First, meeting and writing in Sāmoa

My first meeting with Marjie Crocombe was at a course for writers at the University of the South Pacific's (USP) Malifa Centre in Sāmoa. Makerita Va'ai was the Campus Director at the time, and Marjie was running the course. I was quite apprehensive to meet this woman whom my brother Te'o Ian Fairbairn had talked about so eloquently. An economist, he had worked with Marjie and Ron in Papua New Guinea. I had also heard much about Marjie through her reputation in creative arts and indigenous writing and the South Pacific Creative Arts Society (SPCAS). In my mind, Marjie seemed to stride through the Pacific like a veritable colossus. And this was my first creative writing course. What would she be like? How would I measure up?

When Marjie walked in that morning, I saw a gentle face and manner. She did say, "Write," but in a way which cast a warm and enabling spirit over the workshop and participants. I had not written 'creatively' for many years, but ideas flowed, words were scratched out and refined, lines were shared with others and refined again. At the end of the day, Marjie asked me, "Did you write all those pieces here today?" She could not have made a better comment. I replied, "Yes. Faafetai, faafetai lava (Thank you, thank you very much)." Following that workshop, our Malifa writers group resumed meeting monthly – the requirement being that we share something we were working on. Our work was published in a journal of creative writing called *Moana* and sometimes the writings of the members came out as individual books. Marjie joined us when she was in town. Soon after, she asked me to write a chapter about Samoan writing for a journal issue she and Ron were working on. That was my first published article (Dunlop 1985).

Ron gained a reputation as the one who travelled the globe carrying a suitcase full of books by Pacific writers. To my mind, Marjie was the more on-the-ground person who inspired writers to tell their stories in their own way. Marjie revived and amplified my appreciation of the beauty and power of Pacific voices.

## Second, hospitality and safety in Fiji

I was booked to travel to Suva as the Sāmoa representative for a Pacific regional netball meeting, the main agenda of which was to plan ways we could strengthen Pacific participation in the World Netball Cup. A side agenda for Sāmoa was how we could beat the Cook Islands team – the long-time regional champions. Our Sāmoa Association did not have much of a budget, and Makerita Va'ai suggested I contact Marjie. I did, and Marjie instantly invited me to stay at their home in Mariko Street. I had travelled with Seumanutafa Tiavolo, who was attending a Lands Department meeting. When Marjie met me at Nausori airport near Suva, she invited him to join a small party they were having at their house for the Cook Islands netball contingent. That is when I saw Marjie as a fabulous host – a Marjie absolutely lost and rapt in singing old Cook Islands songs and urging the dancers on. Pacific jokes flew, with Seumanutafa supporting from the side.

I found refuge again at Mariko Street during the scary days of the Rabuka coup in 1987. I had been running an agriculture workshop at Labasa when the coup took place. Again, Marjie swung into action. She picked me up at the airport and took me into the safety of their home. Later, she and Ron shepherded me through the manned road barriers to the airport for my return to Sāmoa – laden with letters from the Sāmoan students assuring their families they were well. Marjie and Ron were undoubtedly a great team. Later again, when I was muddling over whether to hand in my thesis, I found they always 'cut to the quick.' Ron stressed (while Marjie nodded), "Peggy, your thesis is not the last word on this. It's only a basis for further research! Get it in!" Those words became my catch cry with my students.

## Third, playing with children and reaching out to the region

Marjie was coming to Apia for a meeting, and I invited her to stay with us at our small house at the back of the Tanugamanono village by the river. The homes of our other family members are dotted all around our malae (common, sacred area). Tavita, one of my cousins, and his wife had just moved back into their family home (opposite ours) from an outer village, so their daughters (triplets) could go to school. Well, Marjie went out and played with the girls – who were all giggling and laughing with this tall, tall woman who was speaking to them in a mix of English and Cook Islands Māori. I am not sure who was having the most fun, but they were beautiful to watch and listen to. When Marjie came inside, her first words were, "What beautiful names: the sun, the moon, and the stars. O le la, le whetu, ma le masina." Her absolute alofa (compassion, affection) put me to shame: I had not yet made time to welcome the girls properly.

Although our paths crossed many times, I never actually worked with Marjie. When I became Acting Head of Continuing Education, Dr Howard Van Trease was my boss, and I was based at the Alafua Campus. However, during these years I came to witness and understand the full reach of the community enrichment activities Marjie had engaged in, and the regional and national face-to-face and radio linked organizational systems she had set in place in order to open up opportunities for Pacific scholars and to support Pacific indigenous voices. Marjie's diligence, meticulous attention to detail and process, and 'it's not about me … it's about us' attitude were inspirational.

## Last, Rarotonga as network centre

My last meeting with Marjie was post-Covid in September 2021 when I was holidaying on Rarotonga with one of my daughters. I had tried to find the Crocombe house, but all the familiar landmarks had changed. So I called her daughter Nari who said Marjie had had a fall but arranged a time for us to visit. Marjie resting in bed was as indomitable as ever: the state of the world, the state of education and research, the state of the Cook Islands, and what needed doing were major topics of our talanoaga (discussion). She asked if I was on *WhatsApp* and named some of the colleagues and friends she kept in touch with on a regular basis. It was like a USP roll call. And then we turned to family.

Today I honour Marjie – fearless role model, trailblazer, and like an older sister, telling us ‘like it is.’

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## About the author

Sāmoan-New Zealander, **Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop** earned degrees at Victoria University of Wellington and Macquarie University in Australia. Based in Samoa from 1981 to 2005, she worked for UNDP, UNESCO, UNIFEM, and USP. In 2006, she became the inaugural director of Va'aomanu Pasifika, the Pacific Studies Department at Victoria University of Wellington, and in 2009, the founding professor of Pacific Studies at Auckland University of Technology – the first academic to hold a chair in Pacific Studies. Now ‘retired’, she continues to encourage Islanders to publish their stories.

*Marjorie Crocombe delivers an address on Rarotongan cannibalism (photo - Karin Williams, 2008)*

# Nurturing Pacific Island Innovations in Continuing Education in the 1980s

DIANE GOODWILLIE

Marjorie Crocombe's role in promoting early childhood education and other aspects of continuing education is often overlooked. She is probably better remembered for her role in promoting Pacific Islands writers and poets from 1970 onwards. As Dr Linda Crowl has noted, "Writers and publishers from the wider region owe a deep debt to her [Marjorie's] foresight and generosity" (Crowl, 2005:101).

In 1980, 30 pre-school teachers from 15 Pacific countries attended a groundbreaking 10-day workshop in Fiji. Organised mainly through the World YWCA, a steering committee of Suva based educators included the University of the South Pacific (USP) Extension Services (World YWCA, 1980). The attendance by Marjorie Crocombe, USP's Continuing Education Director, and her support for a training role by USP Continuing Education, changed the course of history for Pacific-based early childhood education (ECE).

## Starting from Scratch

Despite such growing global initiatives as the 1979 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Pacific Islands ECE programs were undervalued with limited finances. Up to 1980, most pre-school programs were sponsored by non-governmental groups, churches, or expatriate women. Early childhood curricula varied in facilities and approach but were usually based on imported models from Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and USA and operated for partial days only. Most kindergartens were poorly equipped, lacking puzzles, toys, and books in local languages. Nevertheless, dedicated local, mostly volunteer, women leaders tenaciously worked to improve Pacific programs and services for children under the age of eight.

Although governments sometimes licensed centres, their funding priority remained primary and secondary education. By 1980, training for early childhood educators consisted of overseas exposure visits or through in-service coaching by expatriate volunteers. The 10-day workshop above was enabled by funding from the Netherlands through the Nederlaans Comite voor de Kinderpostzegels (NCK) and the Australian Council of Churches (ACC). The former also funded the 1981 materials development workshop and the *Handbook for Early Childhood Education* (see below). The funding exception was the Fiji government's one-year primary education course offered for a limited time in the 1970s (Toganivalu 2008).

## Learning and Play

Islander pre-school teachers with little formal schooling wanted training and a curriculum which recognized Pacific values and family life. Since parents wanted their children to learn ABCs and math, the untrained pre-school teachers sometimes promoted habits that were confusing when children started primary schools. At the 1980 workshop, Unaisi Tuivaga, from the Fiji Ministry

*Dianne Goodwillie (left) in the USP satellite studio with Gina Wilson (satellite operator) and Tupou Vere (Fiji YWCA) c.1980*

*Marjorie with Fiji Centre colleagues including Sheila Baledrokadroka (right) c. 1977 (photo - USP Media Centre Archives)* of Education, pointed out that teachers should not print children's names in capital letters as the primary school curriculum started teaching the use of lower case (YWCA/USP 1980).

Parents pressed for educational skills rather than learning through play. Local children needed to learn to concentrate and build skills to prepare but not compete with primary school. Amelia Rokotuivuna challenged attendees at the first Pacific Pre-school Workshop: "Why bother with efforts for preschoolers? They can learn as much from playing with all their friends in the village" (YWCA/USP 1980). However, Mrs Telesia Macdonald, supervisor of the Western Samoa Pre-school Association explained, "We want to preserve our culture and customs. We need to help our children understand and be able to adjust to change" (YWCA/USP 1980).

## Organizational Development

The 1980 workshop resulted in a bonanza of new initiatives including the establishment of a Pacific Pre-school Council responsible for workshop follow-up, monitoring ECE progress, and ongoing lobbying for support by government and donors (USP 1990). USP assisted the World YWCA in the publication of *Playing and Learning,* a popular handbook of ECE activities for parents and teachers (World YWCA/ USP 1986). A few years after the 1980 workshop, UNICEF established a project at USP to fund a multi-faceted training and materials production project from 1992 to 1997 (Toganivalu 2008), designed to train participants to produce vernacular storybooks, to create toys with local materials, and to promote parent education, etc.

The lasting achievement of the 1980 workshop was the establishment of the Pacific Pre-School Certificate Course at USP's Continuing Education under the initial guidance of Marjorie Crocombe and followed up by Dr Penelope Schoeffel. The workshop delegates objected to having an overseas expert write course materials, and Marjorie reluctantly agreed for islands kindergarten teachers to write their own course under the guidance of a New Zealand expert, Dr Jane Ritchie. Dr Ritchie had extensive experience with culturally appropriate Māori early childhood curriculum and training.

In 1981, regional kindergarten teachers found it challenging to write their own training materials. The steering committee and Dr Ritchie decided the topics, which were then discussed and points for teaching developed. Such topics as child discipline caused a memorable debate whether "to smack or not to smack." Dr Ritchie held firm views of the damage caused by physical punishment which went against Pacific viewpoints at the time. Funding from NCK and ACC enabled the Samoan Co-ordinator of the Pacific Pre-school Council Mrs Iolesina Tagoilelagi to work full time with USP course developers to create and offer a three-part Certificate course in 1982. It has since been taken by hundreds of USP students, and its popularity led to an ECE Diploma introduced in 1997 and an ECE Bachelors Degree begun in 2006.

## Extension Services and Community Nutrition Education

After Marjorie became Director of Extension Services (1983 to 1988), the new Continuing Education Director Dr Penelope Schoeffel expanded island learning to include village technologies and health. From 1987 to 1991, a USP/Simon Fraser University project used the ECE model of participatory workshops to produce 13 groundbreaking community nutrition modules. It included 70 persons from 19 countries. Using local illustrations and stories, they identified Pacific food practices, promoted use of island foods, and improved nutrition. Local island trainers proudly claimed ownership and used the materials to enhance nutrition education within their own countries. The booklets built the Pacific Islander authors' credibility, and five countries initiated the translation of some modules into local languages (Goodwillie 1992).

Marjorie and Ron Crocombe fiercely advocated a decentralized academic model for USP. This was not always practical, but the concept of countries taking on targeted expertise had merit. For example, Kiribati focused on atoll issues, Vanuatu developed legal education, and Tonga specialised in rural development. With the idea of decentralisation, Marjorie attempted to direct the Canadian resources for the Community Nutrition project to Tonga. That did not happen, but Fiji had such nutrition experts as Susan Parkinson, the capable Fiji Food and Nutrition Committee, years of dietary and nutrition training by the Secretariat for the Pacific Community (SPC), talented artists, and expertise needed for execution of the monumental project.

## Growing Satellite Use by Community Groups

The USP's use of NASA's PEACESAT ATS-1 satellite created increased regional activities and learning. Experiments in its use for distance education were introduced in the early 1970s. Knowing of this resource, Marjorie insisted that the 1980 pre-school delegates visit the USP satellite centre and experiment with its use. The delegates with modest English were somewhat frightened about going to the university, but singing kindergarten songs and hearing voices of colleagues from home helped them overcome their nervousness and thoughts of insecurity and inadequacy. They were so moved about the experience that some broke into tears of excitement and joy. This introduction raised awareness of the potential use, and acceptance, of satellite communication in their own local USP centres for future women's networking. Thus began the use of the satellite by the ECE movement and the YWCA for community education purposes (Feary & Lai, 2012).

Marjorie, a forthright, strong character with fierce determination and a sly sense of humour, had many battles with the telecommunication licensing authorities in Fiji and other island~~s~~ countries. She persisted, and consequently the satellite was not only used for USP courses, such as the Early Childhood Education course, but also for the wider community.

The YWCA was one of the few non-university groups to use the satellite. It was a significant tool for sharing information, organizing upcoming events, and challenging YWCAs to take on more advocacy work. Audio sessions were recorded and notes transcribed for newsletters circulated to each YWCA. The themes that emerged were used for yearly wall calendars and were widely circulated to all Pacific Islands women's groups, schools, and offices. Women gained confidence in speaking up on such issues as Kanaky independence and abuse by foreign countries of Pacific Islands fisheries' rights. For example, after discussing colonialism, independence, and nuclear testing, the Solomons YWCA public affairs group developed a t-shirt imprinted with "America, you can have our fish but don't steal them." An American ship had been impounded for tuna fishing in Solomon Islands waters which led to an American embargo on Solomon Islands tuna. After one such session, Marjorie, worried that these sessions might breach the use of the satellite agreement, mildly rebuked the YWCA organizer by saying the ‘peace’ satellite was to be used for peaceful purposes not politics (personal memory of D. Goodwillie).

## Kindling fires

Marjorie made a lasting impact on the Pacific. She might be best known for her encouragement of Pacific Islands literature, but her contribution to early childhood education, continuing education, and heightened women’s advancement also needs heralding. In 1980, Ioesina Tagoilelagi said, “The birth of a child is the most painful experience in a mother's life. Bringing a spark of fire into a burning flame is also hard work. On the evening of August 11, 1980, a new life was born and a spark of flame was beginning to burn” (in YWCA/USP 1980). Marjorie was an important part of this kindling.

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## About the author

**Diane Goodwillie** began working for the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) in Fiji in 1978, and became Co-ordinator of its Ofis Blong Ol Meri, established in 1982. In addition to training services for early childhood educators, she helped to develop technology and community nutrition training and materials for the region. In the 1990s working for the Canada Fund, she assessed Pacific Islands communities to receive development grants. She later managed the Pacific Environment Program for the World Wildlife Fund.

*(Above, l. to r.) Upokoina Herrmann, Taggy Tangimetua and Vaine Wichman; (below) Marjorie with Polly and Makiuti Tongia at the reception to celebrate the award of D. Litt to Marjorie Crocombe, August 2011 (photo - Tata Crocombe).*

# Te Tui Nei Tona Tivaivai, Sewing Her Tivaivai: Marjorie Tua'inekore Tere Crocombe, Pioneer

VAINE WICHMAN

“I’ve always encouraged writers and artists to find their voices through their stories or art.”
*Dr Marjorie Tua'inekore Tere Crocombe OBE*

Tivaivai means patch(es) of cloth. Tivaivai became a way for our women to describe the artistic work of quilting. The art of writing is not unlike the art of designing and sewing a tivaivai. You have to start somewhere. Most Cook Islands women are young when they become involved in the art of tivaivai.  Exposure encourages experimentation for some. Trial and error guide others.

The aim of producing a tivaivai is to share an experience with loved ones and special guests. The intricate and colourful embroidery work of the tivaivai tātaura, the multicolored patches of the tivaivai ta'orei, and the creativity of the tivaivai manu (fauna, flora) involve choices and levels of sophistication. Ta taura means to use string (thread, cotton). It describes how intricate or plain stitches are layered onto cloth to portray a leaf or flower or colourful pattern created by the artist/quilter. 'Orei means to wipe or a handkerchief; thus, ta'orei means to quilt similarly to a handkerchief. The patterns of flowers or nature organized by the artist/quilter are called ta'orei tivaivai.  Just as the tivaivai is created by thoughts nurtured in our right brain lobe, so too are creative works a result of thoughts collated and structured in our minds processed by our heart.

## Te Ariki

Te ariki is the backing cloth of a tivaivai, onto which the intricate cut-out cloth with embroidery is stitched. Marjorie had a major role in stirring, enticing, and nurturing creative thought and helping to turn it into creative writing. This was the ‘backing’ the early Pacific creative writers needed. Such a canvas had a blue Pacific Ocean speckled by green tops of palm trees, smudged with life colours of brown, sand, red and yellow.

Emma Powell and other Pacific literature researchers point to a ‘first wave’ period when writing by Pacific Islanders took more serious flight. It is no surprise that Marjorie’s name is central to this period of growth for the Pacific Islands writing cadre (Powell, 2013).

### Te Vāito Tivaivai

Te vāito tivaivai are quilt designs, formed by women's perspectives on life and living. Lifelong experiences are teased from patient minds and transplanted into kaleidoscopes of beauty made from fabric, cotton, and embroidery. There are ordinary tivaivai, and there are extraordinary tivaivai. The creative mind sees the product weeks ahead of the finished piece. The design is crucial to the delivery of a masterpiece.

Designing and completing a tivaivai are similar to a writer confronting an empty page, then producing a poem or short story. The more you write, the more you sew, the more your skill progresses and moves your work to the level of art.

Marjorie was a pioneer in writing and especially in encouraging Cook Islanders to write. From the time she enrolled years ago in a course for creative writing, she learned the effort and circumstances involved in submitting written work. This, in turn, influenced and developed her passion to nurture and share the passion of writing with fellow Pacific Islanders. This was especially evident in the plethora of works by women writers that emanated from the South Pacific Creative Arts Society and Mana Publications. Grace Molisa and Hilda Lini from Vanuatu, Momoe Von Reiche and Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop from Sāmoa, Konai Helu Thaman from Tonga, and Haunani-Kay Trask from Hawai'i are just a few of Marjorie's close associates who lit fires themselves to spread creative writing throughout the Pacific.

### Tāmoumou/Tuianga

Tāmou means attaching together, and tui'anga means sewing the tivaivai. Once a tivaivai is started, the lengthy process of lovingly stitching and embroidering the cloth begins. A tivaivai manu (possibly named because it is less time consuming to produce than the other two types of tivaivai) involves cutting out a pattern and embroidering it to the back cloth. The tivaivai tātaura is more elaborate and involves using fancy stitches to fill up the spaces of the tivaivai and to assimilate the cotton and colours to the colours and shades of the object, be it a flower, a fish, or a fruit.

At this stage, the act of putting all the pieces onto the backing takes place, and there is no room for mistakes. Mistakes in stitching on material have to be tediously, painfully unpicked. Futter-Puati (2022) suggests that, in methodological terms, this phase encourages focus on the materials and data collected. Attaching to the backing begins the final journey of analysis, testing the propositions that initiated the project, and completing the story.

Marjorie was involved in two very beautiful pieces of writing that highlight tāmoumou and tui'anga. The first was her book with Papa Ron on *The Works of Ta'unga.* Based on the records of Rarotongan Ta'unga from 1833 to 1896, the book tells about the spread of the gospel from a Pacific Islander missionary's viewpoint. This, the first book by a Pacific Islander writing about countries other than his own, relates his work in, and impressions of, New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands (predating European settlement), as well as Sāmoa.

When I took first year Pacific History at USP, the textbooks and content were written by Europeans but taught by Malama Meleisea, a Samoan. Marjorie's work on Ta'unga cleared the misted lenses of Pacific Islanders and encouraged them to explore their own history through the eyes of their own missionaries who visited and lived in faraway lands and paid the ultimate price of being buried in other Pacific soils.

The amount of poring over and collating information must have been significant. How many manuscripts, letters, and files did Marjie and Ron receive from libraries and archives around the world? How many loose ends had to be reviewed, investigated, edited, and omitted?  Marjorie searched all these details as a Cook Islander and a global researcher. Ta'unga wrote his reports in his Māori language; Marjorie as a Cook Islander had to translate his work. As a global researcher, she had to be objective as the story wove its pattern onto the tivaivai backing. At the time, the internet and search engines were still decades away.

Marjorie would have lovingly stretched Ta'unga's words across her worktable and pondered over this young man from Takitumu who had no more than the shirt on his back and the Bible in his hand as he stood on sometimes hostile Melanesian shores. Ta'unga lived there before any European, and his accounts of the people and their life was groundbreaking.

The second piece of writing highlighting tāmoumou and tui'anga was Marjie's work with a collective of writers from Atiu (see Herrmann, this volume). In his preface to *Atiu: An Island Community,* Papa Vainerere Tangatapoto observed that the publication was a "first attempt to preserve our own tradition and culture in written form, so that it won't be lost in our rapidly changing world" (in Kautai et al., 1995: xi).

Although Marjorie's name does not appear throughout the publication, there can be no doubt that she played a very important role in editing the papers for publication. With her knowledge of the Cook Islands Māori language, her Atiuan uncles would undoubtedly have asked her to help out.

The breadth of subject material in *Atiu: An Island Community* ranged from oral traditions and the recording of pre-contact life, to tales of bush beer schools, to pre-Christian education systems, to marriage, childbirth, and child naming rights, to leadership and Atiuan achievements over the years. The book was reprinted and an Atiu language version was published, *Atiu: E Enua E Tona Iti Tangata* (Kautai et al., 1993).

In 1994, Marjorie held a workshop on Takutea with Class 5 of Enuamanu School of Atiu. The students researched alongside bird specialist Gerald McCormack. As part owners of Takutea, the students were inspired to write; thus, *Takutea: A Collection of Children's Poems* was published (M. Crocombe 2008). Hopefully, others will continue Marjorie's legacy that we "write our stories".

## 'Ākono no te 'Akakoro'anga, O'ora'anga, and Conclusions

‘Ākono no te 'akakoro'anga means looking after for the occasion, and o'ora'anga means opening up the tivaivai and sharing it as a work of art. I have always enjoyed watching the faces of family and friends who visit my mother’s humble home in Vaima'anga as they move from the front of the house to the back. Each bedroom is adorned with a tivaivai that she made.

The spreading of a tivaivai is a warm moment. The mystery. The privilege of being a witness to a private work of art made with love for someone as a gift, a marker.

Marjorie took the work of a humble island pastor schooled on Rarotonga, who was courageous enough to venture into hostile places to spread the Word of God. She also took time out of her demanding schedules to edit and help rewrite Cook Islands hidden histories. What would her tivaivai look like?

A while back, my mum asked me to help her tack together a tivaivai manu piece that she had cut for Marjorie. The theme was sea life. I was surprised and asked, “Why you, Mum? There are more experienced women to cut her tivaivai.” Then she told me her story when she and Marjorie were in the same class at Titikaveka School. Interesting. A remarkable story that increased my appreciation and respect for Marjorie’s immense contribution to writing our stories. I hope I pay worthy tribute to a great woman. In my imagination, Marjorie’s tivaivai would be backed in deep ocean blue – the sporting colours of her village Titikaveka. It would have rays of green and brown scattered throughout representing life and land, for Marjie kept lush gardens throughout her life in Titikaveka, Suva, and Nika'o. It would have shafts of warm yellow sunlight peeping out from behind arrangements of tiare māori and pua neinei – inconspicuous but long-lasting flowers, signifying her existence as a rare Cook Islander – on a dark green bed of maire, the strong fern that does not wilt easily and is used for healing. The browns signify the life of the

*Marjie with Eleitino Paddy Walker, Rarotonga*
*(photo - Florence Syme Buchanan*

coconut as it falls to give life again; her browns have spread to colour the lives of all those unrecognised men and women with hidden stories to be written and published. And if a tivaivai could talk, Marjorie's tivaivai would be telling us, "History can only be told properly by the people of the land – their stories, in their own words and language."

Marjorie Tua'inekore Tere Crocombe, 1930-2022. *E te ra e Hi!*

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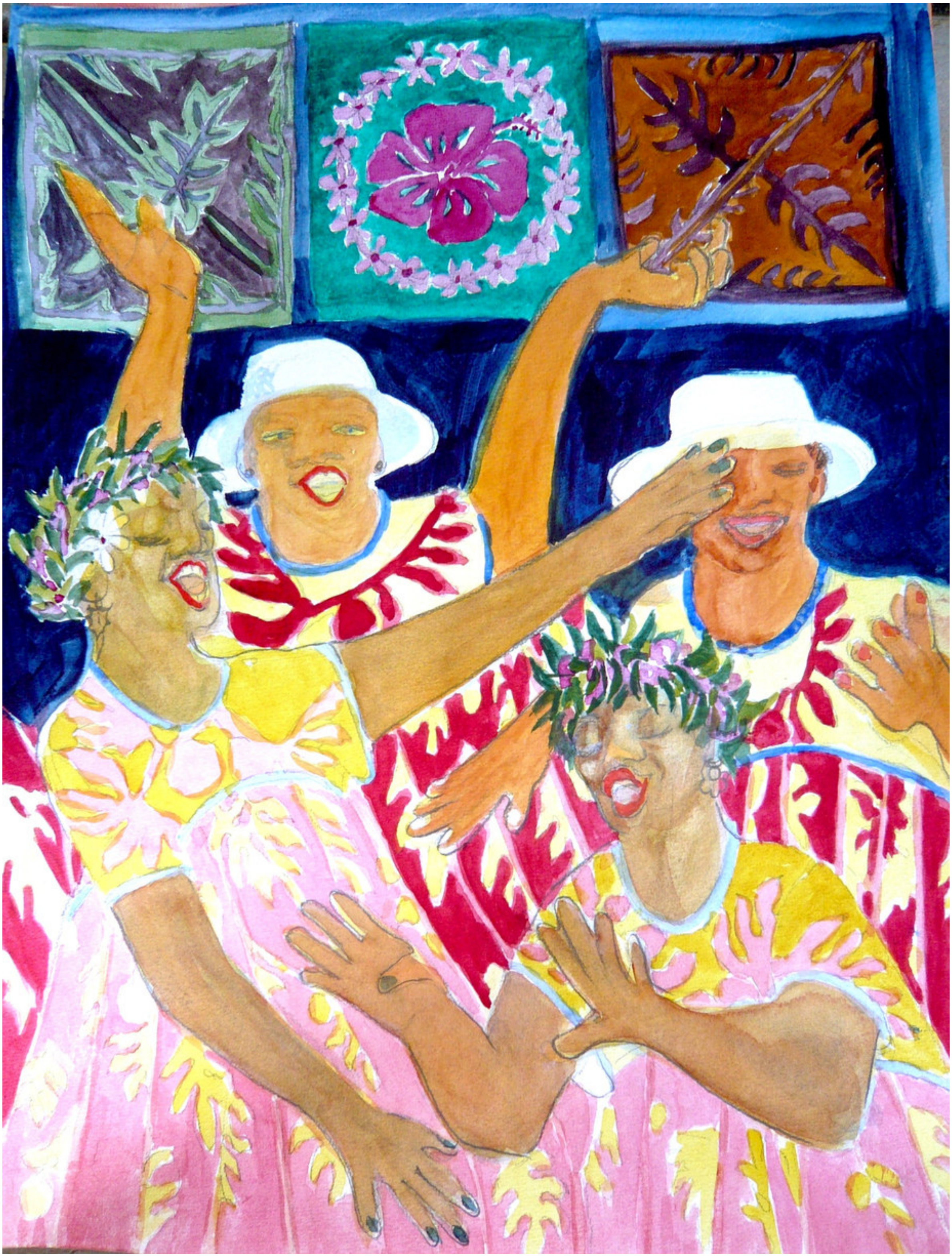
## About the author

**Vaine Iriano Wichman** earned a MSc in Development Economics from the University of Bradford, attended a Leaders in Development course at the Harvard Kennedy School, and produced economic assessments and reports, including for the Asian Development Bank. She was a member of the 11th Cook Islands Parliament, worked as an Associate Minister of Finance, and was the Cook Islands In-Country Co-ordinator for the USP EU Climate Change programme. She has twice been elected President of the Cook Islands National Council of Women. She also has many published creative writings.



*"Tāmataora 1" - courtesy of the artist, Joan Gragg*

# XXX for Marjorie

LISA WILLIAMS

In Samoa, they know that even the stones weep.
In Papua New Guinea, the tears of wailing babies and people will lift up in the hauskrai song.
In Fiji, the mats and tapa will be rolled out, the shells of kava raised.
For yours has been a Pacific journey,
Your ipukarea feet at home on any ground, your Māori mind conquering worlds beyond any room where you filled space and crafted new worlds so beautifully.
Let it all go from student to teacher
From maiden to matriarch, we’ve felt your gaze and your glare.
We’ve been filled by your laughter
Cut to size by your honesty
Lifted by your truth
And now it is time to sing you home.
Let the pastor lecture us on heaven
Let the parents hug their babies closer as they reach for your final uma
Let these hands pause, lost for words
Let it all go.
I’ll keep the photo of you, a defiant protestor of fly-in voters.
I’ll keep the mana of being that one who won’t be told what to think.
I’ll keep the lesson of being the storyteller, because stories are sometimes all we have.
And I’ll keep the faith – as you must have – that life, as you have shown, only beats stronger
when
we trade the sounds of our frail human hearts
for the whale song call
of an
Ocean.

**Glossary**

| | |
|---|---|
| hauskrai | mourning house |
| ipukarea | ancestral, inherited land |
| kava | *Piper methystecum* |
| mana | authority |
| uma | breast, chest |

# Calling Tangaroa – For COP26

LISA WILLIAMS

Pe'e:

*Tangaroa te Atua o te ui tupuna*
*Ko Rongo ma Tane*
*Te papa nui, Te Atua tini,*
*Tangaroa e…*
*Tangaroa te Atua o te ui tupuna*
*Ko Rongo ma Tane*
*Te Papa Nui, Te Atua tini*
*Manu tini … e,*
TANGAROA E

Time
turns on itself
the mana
of calling you
lost
on those who forget
your name birthed generations, crossed oceans ...

But I would breathe you to me
E Tangaroa e
In the same way newborns inhale their mothers
the moment they leave our bodies
In the same way whales crossing oceans
time their travel to the budding wildflowers
on distant shores.

I would hear you in the songs
E Tangaroa e
the calls of creation, of the warrior canoes,
in the chants naming the seasons, the currents, the fish.

I would see you in the tiny curves of pupu shells
E Tangaroa e
deep gold on damp stones after
a heavy rain ...

Now a luxury beachfront property stands where the stones used to be.
Our leaders say there is a clear moral and economic imperative.
Our leaders say We are in a climate emergency.
They say we are in a code red for humanity.
I know.
Tena! There!
In the spaces between earth and sky
I know that people have become small gods
They create, they destroy – not a circle – a cycle of life.

Aue Tangaroa e
The next stage of the creation / destruction cycle is coming.
And when you recover, renew, rebirth,
Remember those who became small gods,
Who sang and danced in your name, and then forgot it.
… and try not to miss us too much.
Tangaroa e …

## Glossary

| | |
|---|---|
| pupu | snail |

## About the author

Cook Islander **Lisa Williams** is a media and communications specialist with a background in newsroom processes. She earned a Postgraduate Diploma in Development Studies. She has worked for the Pacific Community, based in New Caledonia, and the Forum Fisheries Agency, based in Solomon Islands. She is now Public Affairs Adviser for the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

# Small is Beautiful

JEAN TEKURA MASON

(*Remembering natural science explorations, Rarotonga, 1970*)

Nature's infinite mystery and variety
is not lost on us
even as children,
not for one second do we think
that something is more interesting
because it is more remote.
We do not yearn to look
in the far-off Amazon,
nor mountains of Africa,
we find it right here
in the drains at Parekura,
in the culverts of Tutakimoa,
in the garden at home,
animal and plant marvels.
In the mouth of Avatiu stream
baby eels swaying in the current,
in the mudflats of Ruatonga,
koitiraukura parrying with one red claw
dragonflies glittering above puddles,
butterflies shimmering through the air,
blue starfish wavering in the water,
sea anemones' spaghetti hair fluttering,
kanako bodies glistening as they bask on rocks.
Life is as rich here as any jungle,
they might be smaller
but are no less interesting -
life and death
right here under our noses.

We ponder over the function
of different forms,
features and colours
how they help each creature to survive,
we look closely to perceive
something of the ways each species
adapts to its environment
and wonder
how so much life is packed
into such small spaces?

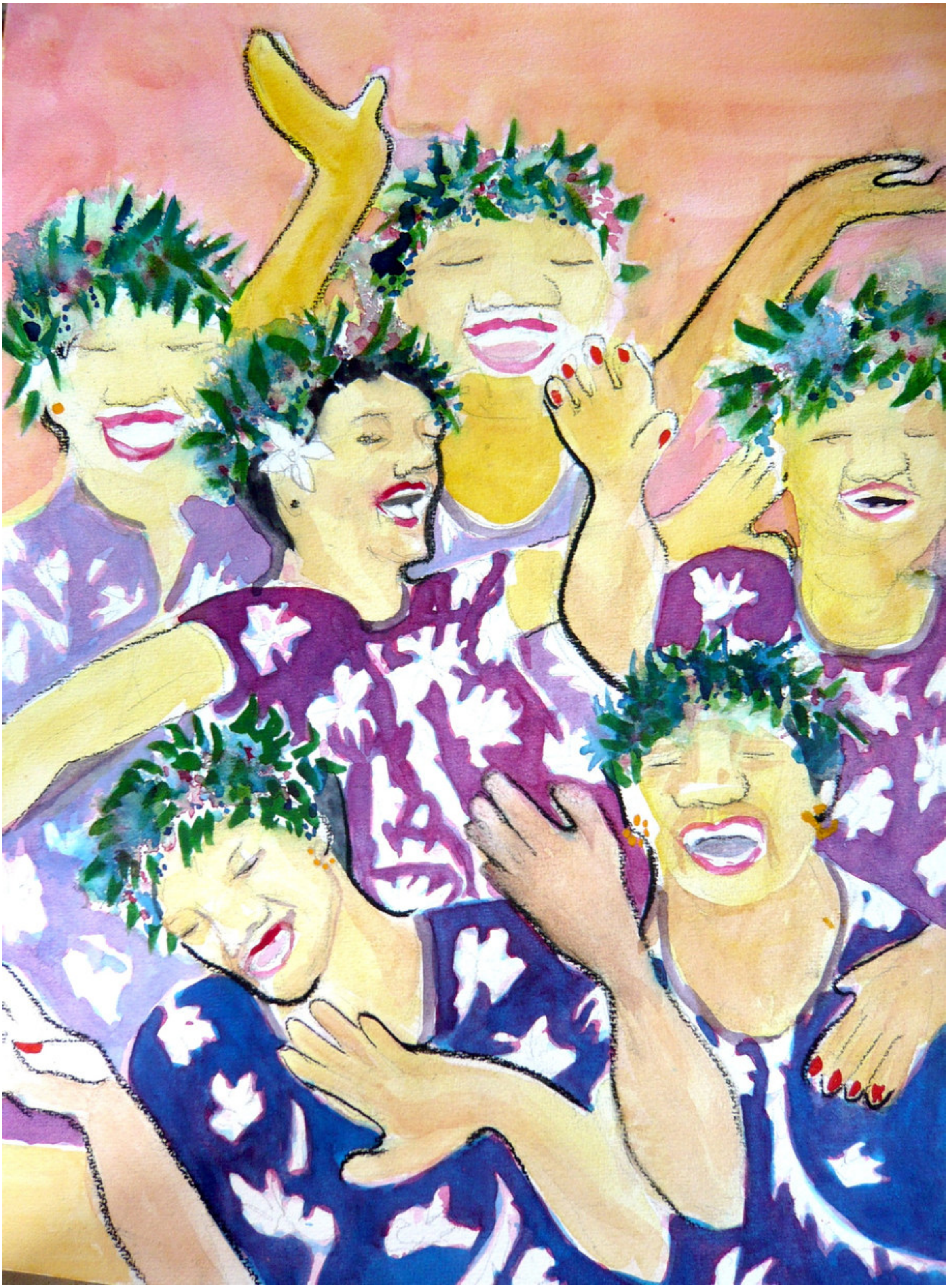
**Glossary**

| | |
|---|---|
| koitiraukura | fiddler crab, once common in Ruatonga mudflats; mudflats now reclaimed |
| kanako | rockskipper, once abundant on Cook Islands shores, no longer seen today |

## About the author

**Jean Tekura Mason** is Curator and Manager of the Cook Islands Library and Museum and has served as an officer of the Cook Islands Parliament. She is also a cultural writer and a poet. Jean is Ngati Nurau and Ngati Teakatauira of Atiu and Mauke; mixed with Scottish (Ngati Turner Lamont) and English (Ngati Geordie).

*photo - Florence Syme Buchanan*



*"Tāmataora 2" - courtesy of the artist, Joan Gragg*

# Calling 2050

## LISA WILLIAMS

Dear 2050
It’s OK. We planned for you –
Knowing humanity has brought us to this turning point of possibilities.
We know the MDGs have come and gone, and it’s not that great on the SDGs either for 2030 –
We know – we may need another three decades to start ticking those boxes.
So many, it’s hard to keep up!
But let’s come back to you, 2050.
Because 2050, whatever you’re looking like and no matter what the climate is doing to our way of life, you need to know – we are trying.
We really are.
We came up with a pathway, a vision, a strategy, a plan to secure our Blue Pacific future. Our North Star.
And 2050, your name is all over it.
It’s blue, and green, with bits of rainbow and really strong threads of equality in there.
Faith, culture, TK, security and well-being. It’s all in the mix.
It’s got the three Ds locked in solid. Connected and hooked.
Yes, the development agencies, the donors, the dialogue partners. Really excited.
You would be so proud.
It’s going to help us get back to the Pacific Way – like, really get back to the REAL Pacific Way.
The one where people come first, where we are connected and in relationship with each other, not just our devices.
Where we remember – who we are, where we are going, and why
Where we move – even if we can only go as fast as our most vulnerable – our children, our pa metua.
Where we understand – the ocean around us and within us is who we are
Where we know, when our ocean is leaking plastic, floating fish, fallen satellites, radioactive cracks, that we see and all the waste we do not yet know of…our mana is leaking too
Where we remember Who we are.
But let’s get back to the point, 2050.
Because despite the code red for climate, you’re our Blue Pacific Future!

You’re not just blue, or green, you’re orange.
For the creatives, the writers, the weavers, the digital nomads and everyone who will still be around and thriving when we hit the magic number, and our words of our past and present become reality.
Because 2050, we’ve got you.
Because we’re going to balance the stewardship with the aspiration.
Because we’re going to speak precautionary principles like they matter
Because they do and yes,
Because we actually may be caught applying them.
Because 2050, you’re all about people. Inclusive, for all of us.

Don’t shake your head, 2050. It’s not like that. You see, we have values.
Good governance, democracies, honest relationships, enduring partnerships.
Yes. It’s all there.
It is – just look. Can you see it?
By the time you arrive, 2050, we may not be around in number, according to the scientists – but yes, we do plan on being around.
Our maritime boundaries and EEZs may surround digital nations.
And there may be more new names from those who want to claim links and lineage to our Blue Pacific continent.
But 2050, you need to know.
Our flags will stand. Our voices and our histories will stand. We will be here.
For you 2050, for you.
We
Us
Your Blue Pacific
People of the sky, land, and sea
2050.

**Glossary**

| | |
|---|---|
| EEZs | Exclusive Economic Zones |
| mana | authority |
| MDGs | Millenium Development Goals |
| pa metua | older relatives |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| TK | Traditional Knowledge |

# Photo Album

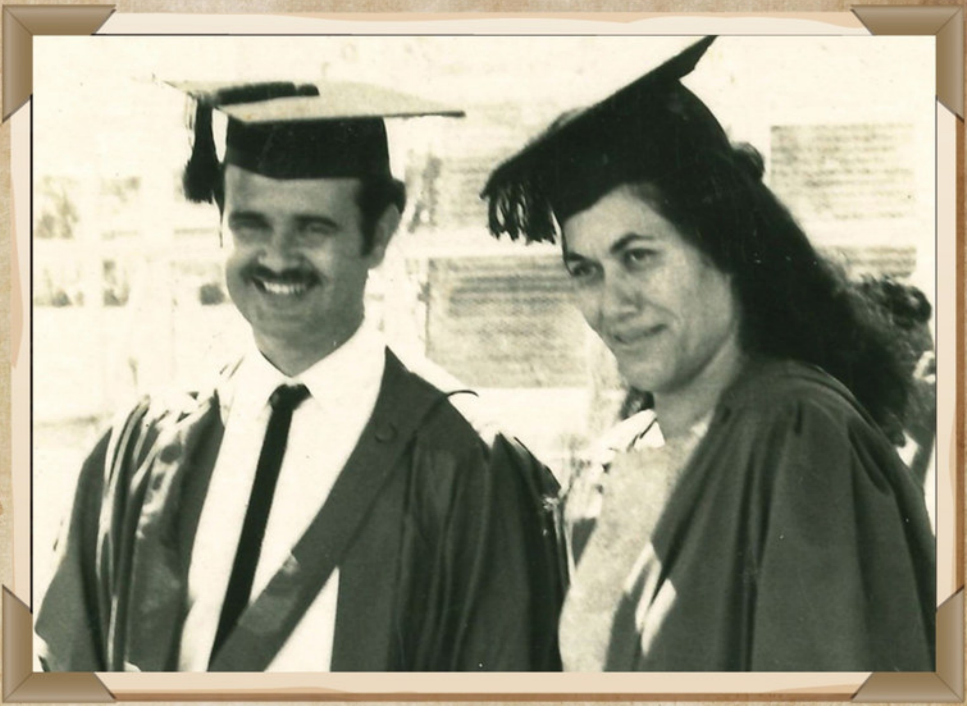
JAIAH ARAI

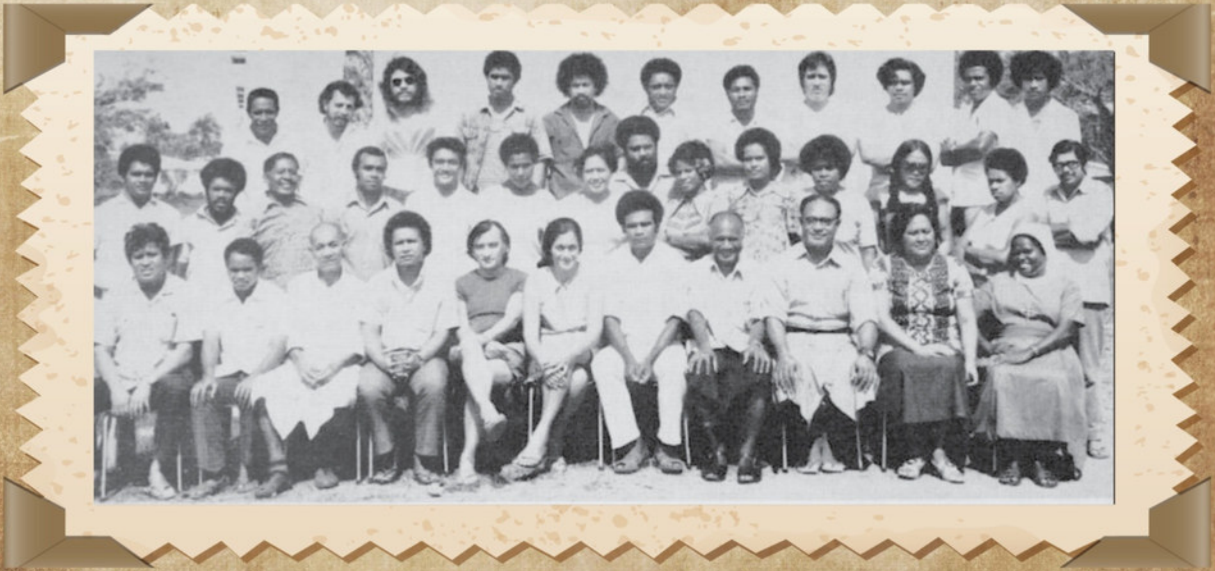
*Marjorie with Mehau Pa Tuoro (nee Robati), eldest daughter of George and Ngateinakore Robati. Arorangi School, preparing class teaching resources*

School Prefects - 1950

*Marjorie (first row, fifth from left) was Head Prefect, Wanganui Girls College, Wanganui, New Zealand, 1950*

*Lionel Brown and Marjorie Crocombe, the first Cook Islands graduates of the University of the South Pacific, at their graduation in Suva, 1971*





*SPCAS creative writing workshop, Suva 1974 – including (front row, middle) Marjorie Crocombe, (centre left) Alistair Te Ariki Campbell and Albert Wendt, (back row 2nd from left) John Herrmann (back row, 4th from right) Harry Ivaiti, (front row 1st and 2nd left) Teata Makirere and Makiuti Tongia. Photo: Pacific Islands Monthly, 1 Nov. 1974*

*Marjorie with her grandson Daniel,*
*Rarotonga, 2011*

*From L to R: Kevin Crocombe, Nari Crocombe, John Herrmann, Marjorie, Ina Herrmann, Tata Crocombe, at the festschrift for Emeritus Professor Ron Crocombe, USP Cook Islands Campus, Rarotonga, August 2010*

*Marjorie and her young family in Suva, Fiji (left to right, Kevin, Nari, Tata and Ron Crocombe)*

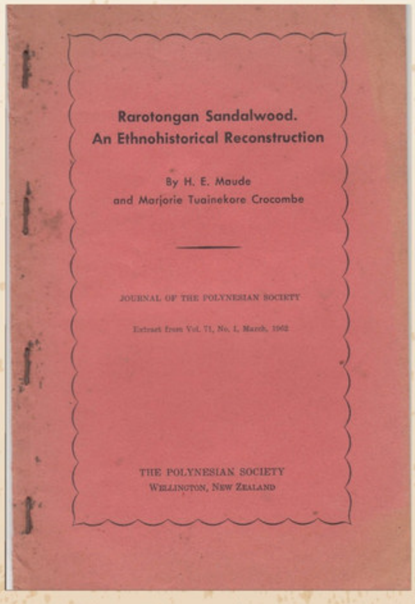
*Marjorie with her daughter Nari, Rarotonga, 2011*

*"Just get on with it…" Marjorie Tua'inekore Tere Crocombe (nee Hosking), 1960s*

USP
COOK ISLANDS CAMPUS

*"Conversations with Marjorie Crocombe" USP Cook Islands, March 2018*

*Pacific Writers Forum, East-West Center, 1994; (left to right) Vilsoni Hereniko, Patricia Grace, Marjorie Crocombe, Haunani-Kay Trask, Nori Vagi Brash, Albert Wendt, Epeli Hau'ofa; (front) Sudesh Mishra and Victoria Kneubuhl*



Rarotongan Sandalwood.
An Ethnohistorical Reconstruction

By H. E. Maude
and Marjorie Tuainekore Crocombe

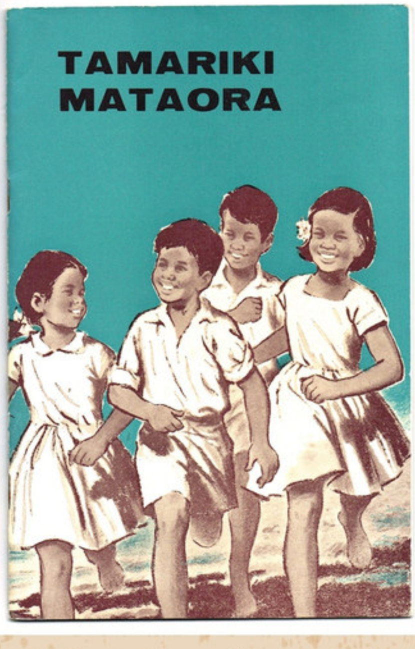
JOURNAL OF THE POLYNESIAN SOCIETY

Extract from Vol. 71, No. 1, March, 1962

THE POLYNESIAN SOCIETY
WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND

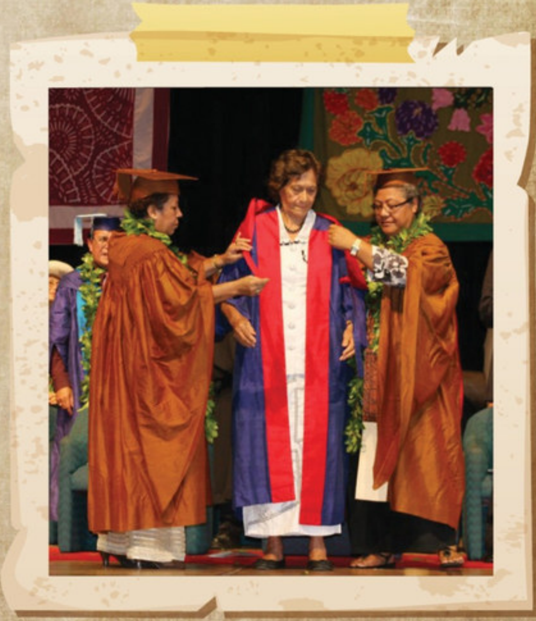
***In 1962 Marjorie co-authored with H.E Maude an early ethnohistorical study, entitled "Rarotongan Sandalwood: The Visit of Goodenough to Rarotonga in 1814", published in The Journal of the Polynesian Society, Vol. 71, No. 1 (March 1962)***

***"Tamariki Mataora" was a primary school reader written in Rarotongan, by authors Marjorie Tua'inekore Crocombe, Titi Numanga, and Eileen Grant, and illustrated by Conrad Frieboe, and published by the Islands Education Division, Wellington, N.Z., c1958***



*With Cook Islands and USP leaders at the 2011 ceremony conferring on Marjorie the degree of Doctor of Letters (D. Litt.) Honoris Causa*

*Marjorie displaying her diploma for Doctor of Letters (D. Litt.) Honoris Causa*



*Marjorie Crocombe being ceremonially enrobed as a Doctor of the University of the South Pacific by (right) Pro Chancellor Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa and (left) Lily Vesikula, Secretary of the University Council, Rarotonga, 2011*

*With Professor Jon Jonassen*

*USP Graduation, Rarotonga, 2005, (left to right) the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, the Honorable Jim Marurai, Vice Chancellor and Professor Anthony Tarr, and University Registrar Walter Fraser, Professor Emeritus Ron Crocombe, Marjorie Crocombe*

# Reading as Cousins: Indigenous Texts, Pacific Bookshelves

ALICE TE PUNGA SOMERVILLE

## Marjorie Crocombe and Pacific Literary Studies

It was a thrill for me, and humbling, to be asked to contribute this essay for inclusion in a book that both traces and honours the remarkable work of a foundational Pacific academic and thinker. I asked to add a few words that provide context not only for the essay but also for how I, a NZ Māori person, started the essay with a photograph that includes Marjorie Crocombe. This essay was originally written for a keynote I delivered in nipaluna/ Hobart for the conference of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature; the conference was themed 'The Mabo Legacy, 30 years on' and I spoke that week alongside Indigenous people from Australia: Aboriginal literary scholar/ poets Dr Jeanine Leane and Dr Evelyn Araluen gave the other keynotes; Indigenous thinkers Gail Mabo and Jim Everett also addressed the conference. As an outsider to that place, I decided to draw connections between Indigenous Australia and the Pacific – not in order to undermine or over-write the Indigenous people of that place but, instead, to seek connections with them that were not routed through the state of Australia.

In a specific way it made sense to start my keynote, and this essay, with what I have come to call 'the impossible photograph'. After all, this photograph of three Indigenous literary luminaries from Australia, Fiji and the Cook Islands, presents an opportunity, or a nudge, or maybe even a kick, to seek opportunities to trace connections between Indigenous writers that don't seem to fit our established stories of writing. To speak among Indigenous Australian people about connections with the Pacific region, what better starting point than a genealogy of relationship between the two literary matriarchs Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Marjorie Crocombe?

In more general ways, though, I have found it increasingly impossible to tell any story of Pacific literatures that doesn't at some point find its way to Mama Marjorie or her work. In my current research I have been tracing her iconic work with *Pacific Islands Monthly* and *Mana* but also her many other publications, editing projects (including, of course, the South Pacific Creative Arts Society) and collaborations (including, of course, with her husband). In the first issue of the critical journal *Mana Review* in 1976, Fijian poet Pio Manoa wrote "the more we read poems from the other islands, the more we get a sense of belonging together." I have come to understand the beautiful but hard work Mama Marjorie did to create opportunities for this mutual reading to even occur – the careful research into literary genealogies, the letters written and answered, the stuffing and mailing of envelopes, the applications for funding, the writing done for educational publications. As an Indigenous Pacific woman academic, I have been keenly interested in her commitments to institutional as well as creative work. Coming to understand the reach her work (largely by bumping into her everywhere I look) has ultimately prompted me to reconsider how we think about the role of someone whose contribution to literature is so profound but has not been – at least not in published form – through creative writing itself.

For a long time, we in Pacific literature have enthusiastically engaged with PNG scholar/ poet Steven Winduo's articulation of 'Pacific writer/ scholars' from his influential 2000 essay; 'Pacific writer/ scholar' has been a useful way to think about the many people whose contributions are academic as well as critical (most famously, perhaps, Albert Wendt and Epeli Hau'ofa but certainly many others too), but I have become concerned that this has functioned to make less visible the significant contributions of those who do not operate in both of those domains. For several years I have been telling my students that Mama Marjorie Crocombe is the third musketeer (alongside Wendt and Hau'ofa) of the thinkers who brought us the concept of Oceania – and more recently I have realised how this can also shape my own approach to thinking about Pacific literature. Directly as a result of reflecting on Marjorie Crocombe's work, and how the origin stories of Pacific literature have tended to focus on the producers of the creative texts but not so much the producers of the space for those texts to be created and shared, I have been thinking about an addition to Winduo's formulation. I have been working on an essay about Marjorie Crocombe's work in which I propose the addition of 'connector' to Winduo's concept to create the idea of Pacific writer/ scholar/ connectors.

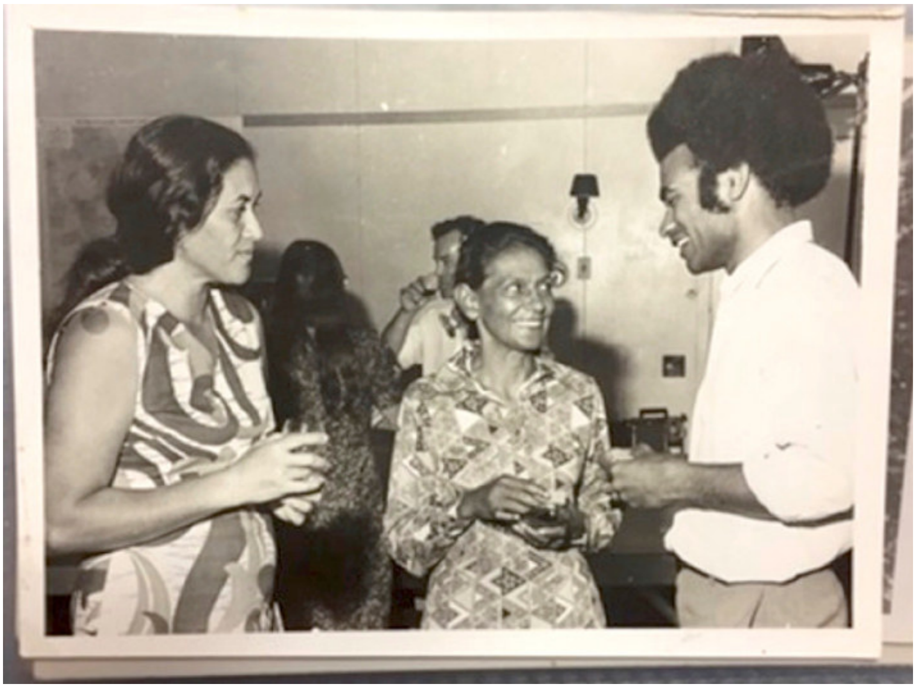
For me, the production and nurturing of connections is a deeply Indigenous and deeply Pacific way of operating. This happens through the creation and maintenance of spaces in which other people can meet each other – classrooms, organisations, workshops, pages. My question has become: how do we account for Crocombe's contributions to Pacific literatures, and literary studies, in the region? We can note her own editorial writing, and her scholarly work about writing in the region – but what do we lose (especially in narratives often dominated by a fairly small group of men) if her connecting work as an editor, educator and writers' festival organiser is left to linger at the edges of our pages about the story of Indigenous literatures in the Pacific? What configurations and networks of Indigenous creatives become invisible to us again if literary scholars decide the work of gathering people together is just interesting backstory? Who else becomes visible when we expand our view of who 'creates' Indigenous literatures? (So many more! Noting Mama Marjie's editorial work has drawn my attention to note the editorial contributions of Katerina Mataira, Alistair Te Ariki Campbell, Sefulu Ioane and, yes, Albert Wendt.) One approach to our writing may be to trace not just the vast amazing dynamic networks of Indigenous writers but also the creators, keepers, nourishers, selectors, encouragers, warmers of those networks. The connectors.

Genealogy is multi-directional in the Pacific, and I wish to end my acknowledgement of Mama Marjie's work by noting her keen appreciation not just of the long genealogy but also the sure future of Pacific writing. In a 1965 bilingual school publication called *Two Hundred Changing Years: a story of New Zealand's little sisters in the Pacific – the Cook Islands, the Tokelau Islands, and Niue Island*, in the final chapter titled 'Maretu – who wrote some of our history,' Crocombe writes: “Some of the old people in the islands today still have family books in which genealogies ('akapapa'anga) and stories from the past were written. If your family has one of these books you should ask your parents to tell you all about what is written in it. Always look after these books very carefully, for they can tell us things which have long been forgotten. Much of the history of our islands has not yet been written. Perhaps one day, one of you who reads this little book will set about the great task of collecting all the information and writing a book on the history of our islands.” In this ending, Crocombe speaks directly to the child who is not just imagined to be a reader but also a future writer. She reframes completely any assumptions about reading and writing being a non-Indigenous act and restores writing to the contexts of family, islands and region. Even as she finishes her own book on “the history of our islands” she creates space for others to dream their way into writing their books too. *Two Hundred Years* appeared a decade before my own birth, and eleven years before Pio Manoa described the effects of “read[ing] poems from the other islands,” and I cannot trace my own whakapapa through the Cook Islands except in the widest Māori sense … but I still consider it to be a privilege to count myself among the many ‘children’ who have read the works Mama Marjie has written or enabled to be written and, by so doing, gained a new understanding of the history and possibilities of writing in our ocean.

* * *

> But I am not for adoption.
> I love my land […]
> My land is my race, my joy
> My birth of pain,
> So with a jet’s roar
> Goodbye beautiful Fiji.
>
> (Jack Davis “Farewell Fiji,” lines 8, 9, 15–18)

I write as a Māori scholar and poet, and also, because I’m Māori, as a *Pacific* scholar. My work seeks to restitch the stories of my people back into the wider Pacific region and to understand how the threads that previously held them together unravelled over the past two centuries. The thread I stitch with is literary studies, but the needle I hold is an alloy of Indigenous Studies and Pacific Studies. A legacy of colonialism in the Pacific region has been the wresting apart of interconnected Pacific sites and peoples. For several decades many (in the Pacific, at its edges, and beyond) have sought to recall and reignite our longstanding connections with each other that have felt less pressing over the past centuries as we have dealt with our respective colonial states and empires. Most of this decolonising work in our region involves rethinking the ocean as *presence* or perhaps *substance* rather than *absence*. Scholars working alongside (and as) activists, poets, community members, knowledge holders, voyagers, and filmmakers turn attention to the ocean as an Indigenous Pacific space. We find that tracing *back* inevitably ends up tracing *outwards* towards each other. How far out do we trace? And who do we find when we follow Indigenous histories of connection?



*"The impossible photograph" held at Fryer Library, University of Queensland, "Margie, Kath, Jo [Nacola], Fiji, nd" UQFL84 Noonuccal, Oodgeroo 14.229*

## The Impossible Photograph

There is a photograph from 1974 in Oodgeroo Noonuccal's papers in the Fryer Library, University of Queensland. Noonuccal stands between Cook Islander academic, historian and anthologist Marjorie Crocombe, and Indigenous Fijian playwright (now parliamentarian) Jo Nacola. They are wearing fabulous fashions from the time and are in conversation, each holding a glass or cup, during a writing workshop in Fiji. Fiji had recently gained political independence from the British empire in 1970 and was host of the main campus of the multi-country University of the South Pacific (USP), a new institution for a new era of education and cross-regional cooperation in the Pacific, opened in 1968. At the time, Crocombe and Nacola were academics and heavily involved in the South Pacific Creative Arts Society, a group of Pacific writers and artists from across the region. I think about this image as "the impossible photograph" because conventional accounts of national, Indigenous and Pacific literatures don't provide a way to make sense of this photograph, or even to imagine it exists.

Fiji, Nacola's home where this photograph was taken, has complex literary traditions that have mostly been traced by non-Indigenous scholars. For several years, there was a lively critical conversation about the literature of Fiji, although the main site of this work, the USP Department of English, has become less energetic in its interests due largely to changes in academic staff but also perhaps to questions of nationalism and the nation becoming increasingly vexed in Fiji in recent years. Fijian politics of race and Indigeneity, especially during the years of Bainimarama's reign, have privileged multicultural narratives of Fiji's national literature and stifled opportunities to engage Indigenous-authored texts on their own terms. Yet, I hope that new energy in the study of Fijian literature via the Fijian language program at USP will also reopen conversations and bring appropriate recognition to Indigenous Fijian (iTaukei) writers who write in English language, like Nacola.

Crocombe's home, the Cook Islands, is connected to New Zealand's Pacific empire; it remains, along with Niue and Tokelau, part of the "Realm of New Zealand." Crocombe had already been intensely interested in the region's production through writing; she completed a masters at the University of Papua New Guinea and, throughout the 1960s and 1970s, published a number of works on topics connected to early Pacific writing (Crocombe et al., 1968). Although Cook Islanders are the gold medal winners in most events at the Pacific literary Olympics, Cook Islands literary history is less well treated in literary studies for pragmatic reasons of institutional capacity and scholarly focus. The small but feisty Rarotonga campus of USP, through the leadership of Debbie Futter-Puati in connection with Mama Marjorie Crocombe herself and researchers such as Tai Parima Trego, has been reckoning with Cook Islands literary legacies as have some New Zealand-based postgraduate students, such as Emma Ngakuraevaru Powell, Marylise Dean, and Stacey Kokaua.

Of course, the third person in this photo, Oodgeroo Noonuccal, is familiar to anyone in Australian literary studies. Although Noonuccal's writing is surely foundational to any discussion of Australian literatures, what inquiries and expertise would a scholar of Australian literature need in order to see this photo in the Fryer library and respond by saying, "Ah yes, cool photo, Noonuccal in Fiji with Crocombe and Nacola. Of course."? Between Fiji literary scholars (who have found themselves with plenty to focus on in terms of the complex relationship between the various communities who call Fiji home), Cook Islands literary history (which does not lack texts but lacks literary scholars working in literature departments), and Australian national literary history (which is well stocked with scholars but seems to prioritise domestic focuses for Indigenous writing and to only engage the Pacific minimally), who will trace the networks that lead to (and from) this photograph?

Arguments about the consequences of focusing scholarly attention on national literatures have been made by numerous scholars, including many connected to ASAL (the Association for the Study of Australian Literature). I think of the incomparable Pākehā scholar Lydia Wevers, who delivered the Dorothy Green lecture in 2008, and who passed away in 2021. Having moved to Vancouver in February 2022, I was unfortunately unable to attend the public farewells for Lydia, but I cherish memories of a final coffee and chat we shared shortly before her passing. Our paths crossed when I arrived in my first academic job at Victoria in Wellington in 2005 and she was head of the Stout Centre for NZ Studies. She invited me to give my first academic talk, talked books and co-supervised students with me, and spent literally hours in her office with her door closed while I sat across from her desk crying into cups of tea about how my first academic job was going. It was Lydia who first told me about ASAL – she valued so deeply the community and intellectual work of this association – but I always replied, "Sounds cool, Lydia, but I don't study Australian lit," which became less true over time as my transnational Indigenous interests and academic posts expanded. In 2014, when I moved to take up a position on Dharug country at Macquarie University, I attended my first ASAL conference. In her 2008 lecture, which was published in the 2009 issue of *JASAL*, Lydia predicted a shift in critical engagements with

Indigenous literatures that would emerge from the new (at the time) interdisciplinary scholarly association NAISA (Native American and Indigenous Studies Association), and the work of global Indigenous literary studies more broadly.

I agree with Lydia about the potential for Indigenous-centred/Indigenous-focused interdisciplinary communities, scholars, and critical work to transform the conversations in national sites, especially given the dominance of social sciences in institutional Indigenous Studies in this part of the world. One tangible expression of the transformative potential of Indigenous-centred literary scholarship Lydia described can be found in Chadwick Allen's Dorothy Green lecture delivered at UNSW Canberra back in 2016 (Allen, 2017). (These Indigenous literary critical contributions are reciprocal, of course; there is a clear genealogy of Indigenous Australian scholarship present in my own critical work, and I am deeply mindful of the privilege and opportunity to have initially shared these thoughts as a keynote alongside First Nations literary scholars Jeanine Leane and Evelyn Araluen in *nipaluna*.) But, Indigenous-centred/Indigenous-focused interdisciplinary conversations are also shaped by contexts of history, politics, and resourcing. Indeed, neither of my own "interdisciplinary" fields, Indigenous Studies and Pacific Studies, has developed ways to assume this photograph exists either, and I suggest this is connected to the complicated relationship between the two fields and the many things that fall into the gaps between them.

Indigenous Studies and the independent Pacific are largely mutually lukewarm about each other. In *South Pacific Literature: From Myth to Fabulation*, Indo-Fijian literary scholar Subramani fixed his gaze on writing from newly independent Pacific states connected to the University of the South Pacific and his own base in Fiji. He jettisoned Indigenous Australian and Māori writing in the book's opening pages, arguing that these are better treated within the national literary studies of their occupying states, and sidestepped the US Empire of which Hawai'i is a part (Subramani, 1985; x–xi). My current research (and all of my work) directly refutes the forced repatriation of Indigenous writing from New Zealand, Hawai'i, and Australia to the framing (or possession?) of our respective colonial states. More broadly, the Pacific has a complex relationship with the concept of indigeneity. Some sites in the region clearly meet a definition of "Indigenous" that suggests Indigenous peoples need to be living in an oppressive relationship with a state dominated politically, if not numerically, by others: Aotearoa and Hawai'i, but also Guam, all of the French and American colonies / dependencies/ territories / possessions / departments in the region, Rapanui (Easter Island), and West Papua. However, when we engage "Indigenous" not merely as a category but as a critical analytic, there are possibilities to engage a wider range of sites in discussion, including many of the Pacific sites which are self-governing.

Reciprocally, Indigenous Studies isn't sure about what to do with the Pacific region either, partly because of the domination of scholars and resources from Anglophone settler colonies in NAISA and other networks, and partly because of the institutionalisation of the disciplines and networks/mobilities of Indigenous Studies scholars in settler rather than independent states. Some of this "who's in and who's not" then becomes habit or structure: anthologies, collections, conferences, class syllabi, and journals are sites where people learn who they expect to see in Indigenous Studies. I worry that our enthusiasm for connection with certain kinds of Indigenous people can feel awkwardly like it resonates with colonial networks and desires. How can we decolonise our relationships with other Indigenous peoples?

I have not attended to specific national or transnational literary fields in order to undermine them. Instead, I have attempted to foreground their various reasons for not telling stories that make the impossible photograph feel possible. Certainly, Indigenous Studies and Pacific Studies emerged from very different conversations and struggles, as did their respective offshoots or side-shoots, Indigenous literary studies and Pacific literary studies. And certainly, it is risky to argue too strongly for New Zealand, Australia, and Hawai'i to "reconnect" with the Pacific when the first-world settler states in these places mean we have access to resources and microphones that can dominate the rest of the region, and many parts of the Pacific have histories of violent struggle to remove themselves from Australian and New Zealand colonialism. Likewise, there is a risk of contributing, in the case of Aotearoa and Hawai'i, to the ongoing domination of Polynesian voices in the region. However, we all lose something important when contemporary disciplinary and political configurations obscure the dynamic Indigenous-produced (literary) networks that were affirmed throughout the twentieth century.

## Lateral Genealogies

Genealogies stretch wide as well as back. In a pivotal moment in Māori writer Patricia Grace's first novel, *Mutuwhenua: The Moon Sleeps* (1978), the central character Linda goes to her grandmother's house to insist she attend Linda's wedding. The grandmother refuses to support the partnership, and Linda responds by reciting her own genealogy:

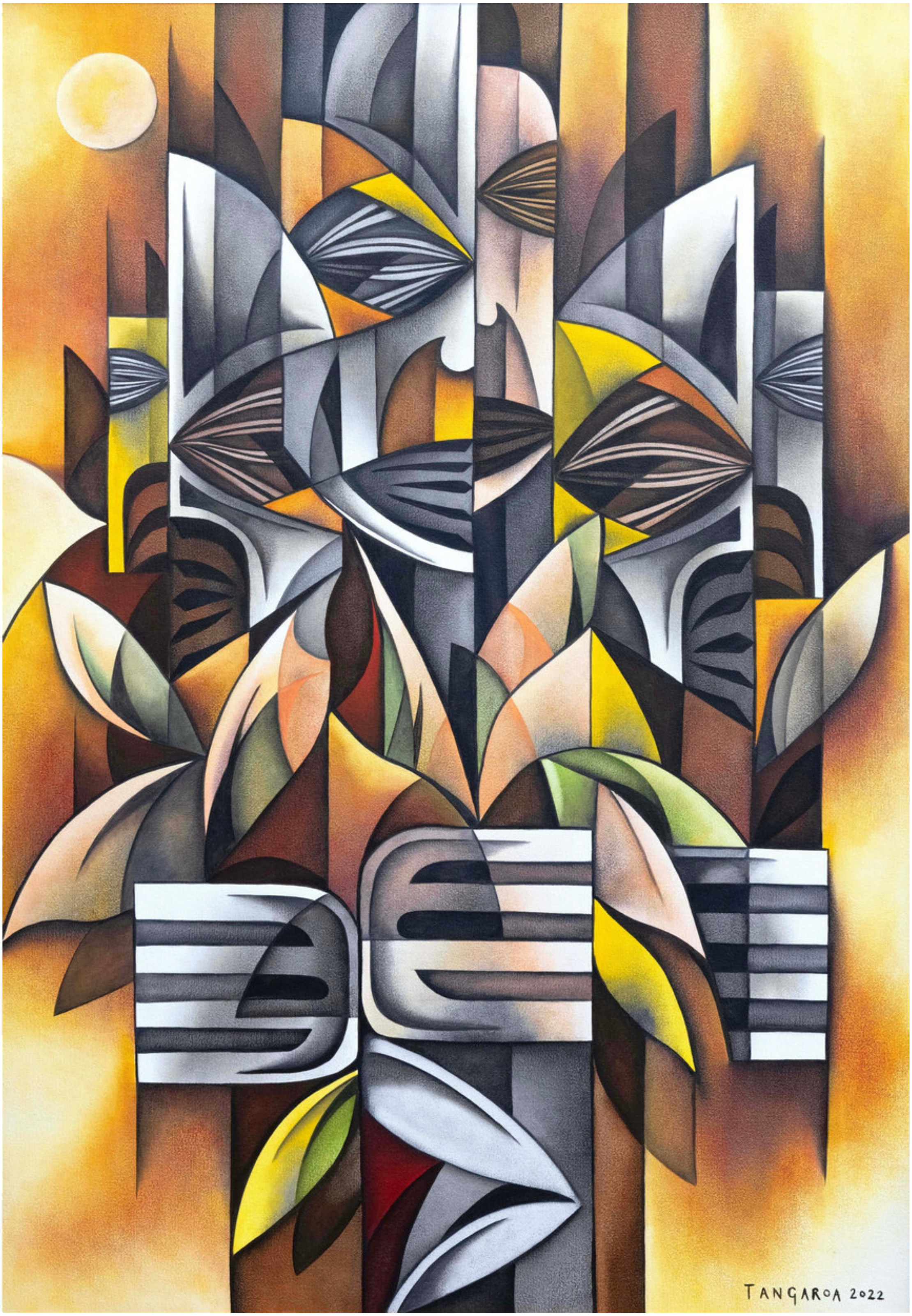
> Then I began to recite the old names to her, the ones from the wall and the ones from before then, and the ones before that. It was strange to hear these old things in the new voice, my voice that had never sounded them before. And if I faltered here and there my father and uncle joined in with me, until I stopped. "But that's only the trunk of the tree," I said, "the length." And she nodded, waiting for me to go on. "Now these are the branches that spread everywhere," and I continued the recitation, linking every name with every name until there were no more. "And every branch reaches out," I said. "Touches every other" (Grace, 1978; 100–101).

On one level Linda makes the point to her grandmother that she is related to everyone and so needs to go outside the immediate region to find a partner. More broadly, she affirms by this recitation that she remembers who she is and how she connects, and assures her grandmother that this marriage will add to, rather than remove her from, their family network. Significantly, this strategic recitation moves in two directions.

The first genealogical direction is described as a series of names. "The ones from the wall" refers to the practice of hanging photographs of deceased family members on the back wall of a meeting house – they are often still in living memory, or were known by people that still-living people knew. The two layers of people beyond them ("the ones before them" [ancestors] and "the ones before them" [deities and non-humans]) are known only through the recitation of names. For a few years, I have worked on a project called "Writing the New World: Indigenous Texts 1900 - 1975" which pushes back on how the mid-70s has become a mythical origin story for Indigenous writing in many sites. I seek to understand the texts that were published by

Indigenous writers between the period we associate mostly with first encounters and unpublished manuscripts and groaning belly-full colonial archives at the pre-1900 end, and the supposed "firsts" of the 1970s and beyond. Our celebratory stories of our beloved publications and writers of the 1970s have unfortunately obscured so many writers and texts that came before. My project seeks to name the ones from the wall – the ones we in living memory know – including, of course, Patricia Grace herself, but I have also sought the names of the ones from before them – the ones whose names have been forgotten. Not because the names we already know aren't worth knowing, but because we get to experience them in new ways when they are understood in a broader context, as continuity rather than as origin. I agree with Linda that it feels "strange to hear these old things in a new voice," and this "strange[ness]" is increased by my sense that I *should* have known these names already. Also, like Linda, I am aware that this is not a job for one person. She describes the limit of personal knowledge as "falter[ing]" ("if I faltered here and there my father and uncle joined in with me") – but such limits of personal recollection enable connection, require a network of thinkers, and demand collaboration and reciprocity. When you claim to know everything, or presume everything is knowable by yourself, there is no need for anyone else. Faltering – not being exhaustive, but also *not striving to be exhaustive* – makes space for others. So far, so good. We like literary genealogies that go back in time. We recover the lost texts. We re-write histories and have to make more room on our pages and PowerPoint presentations to fit in all the new names. We find out about "new" "forgotten" writers. We work collaboratively. We think about the broader contexts of power, imperialism, disciplinarity, and violence that render some texts – some names – invisible to the point we don't even imagine they existed in the first place. We theorise this. We teach it. Probably most of you do this. I do this. We could leave it here, and for the rest of this paper I could explore Māori literary genealogies. But how rude would it be of me at a conference in Australia explicitly themed in relation to Mabo to only talk about Māori literature? How rude – and how colonial. How settler-ish. After tracing the genealogy, Linda's recitation remains incomplete: "Now these are the branches that spread everywhere . . . And every branch reaches out . . . Touches every other."

I could have focused my research energies entirely on Māori writing – goodness knows that work needs to be done – but instead, I have worked with sixteen other Indigenous researchers (undergraduate and postgraduate students, and community researchers) to find, analyse, share, and contextualise texts by Indigenous writers (with a focus on periodicals and creative works) in four different Pacific sites: Aotearoa, Fiji, Hawai'i, and Australia. Together we have reconnected with so many writers. A mind-blowing range of people publishing their words in English and six Indigenous Pacific languages. We have found such a range of periodicals, we're speaking and writing about what we found, and we've made a podcast to share some of our research findings and to encourage more. Some of the students have commenced or completed postgraduate research on specific texts; several have presented or published collaboratively about their work. This part of Linda's genealogy is inclusive – "linking every name with every name" – and its purpose is relational rather than possessive. Linda names in order to "link": not to collect, but to connect. My thinking about lateral genealogy, that emerges from reflecting on this passage in Grace's novel, also owes a partial debt to Pākehā historian Tony Ballantyne's concept of horizontal mobility: "the forms of movement and cultural traffic that linked colonies in the 'periphery' together" (Ballantyne, 2001). Engaging lateral branches of Indigenous writing is not


TANGAROA 2022

*"Prophecies of Custodians" by Mahiriki Tangaroa, 2022 (photo - courtesy of the artist)*

an attempt to extend dominion over a larger territory or to know more for the sake of possessing more. Lateral extension has a deliberate purpose: to trace, recall, understand and affirm connection. But who am I to trace these lateral genealogies?

Methodologically, my multi-site research raises questions. My decision to trace the branches means I spend much time writing about Indigenous contexts and texts to which I have no genealogical connection. This is worth noting. Elsewhere I argue that being an insider to any one Indigenous community doesn't make you an insider in any others (Te Punga Somerville, 2022). At the risk of stating the obvious, these questions also connect to a Māori scholar standing on Palawa country to speak alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait thinkers in a conference about Mabo. Many Indigenous scholars have challenged the western academic presumption that *who* is doing research is irrelevant, to the extent that anyone should be able to research anything. We in the academy feel strongly about academic freedom because we know what happens when academic freedom is curtailed, and when there are political or other forms of interference in knowledge production. And yet, the risks are clear: individual researchers may think they can study what they want, but risk doing it in ways that reproduce harm on particular communities or detract resources from research that is urgent for those communities; they may inadvertently or deliberately repeat dominating patterns of controlling knowledge production about certain peoples or places; and they are part of structures that may harm communities beyond the academy and (through structural racism) reinforce barriers to Indigenous people within those institutions. Jennifer C. Nash describes the tension between calling for non-Black scholars to cite and engage Black women's work, and the risk that "successful" take up of this call can backfire in terms of institutional effects where calls for Black women scholars can be made to appear redundant. Nash writes:

> While I am compelled and at times even seduced by the rhetoric of "citing Black women," I also find myself troubled by what Angela Harris described as the "trotting out" of Black women "onto the page (mostly in footnotes)" as evidence of the authors' (real or fictitious) political commitments (2020; 87).

Presence of Indigenous acknowledgements without presence of Indigenous scholars is not what we have been arguing for in the academy. We are no longer silenced by redundant patronising arguments about lack of capacity on our part. This is not the grounds for a generative conversation.

Perhaps thinking about "insiders" and "outsiders" might feel like well-trodden ground or irrelevant or like I am trying to be a social scientist, but it is a necessary conversation in literary studies too. These arguments do not come out of a desire for non-Indigenous scholarly absence as much as they foreground what is gained by Indigenous scholarly presence. Calling for more Indigenous scholars, for Indigenous-focused projects to be guided by Indigenous scholars, and for research to respond to the desires and concerns of Indigenous communities, is not about merely substituting non-Indigenous bodies with Indigenous bodies who can then find the same answers to the same questions, or even different answers to the same questions. These arguments are also not about Indigenous researchers drawing on vast repositories of "culture" or "innate knowledge" in ways that both undermine the work and scholarly training of Indigenous scholars and disenfranchise those Indigenous researchers who *for reasons connected to* *colonialism in the first place* are not in close proximity to the language or culture of their ancestors or close relatives. Instead, I have observed that when Indigenous peoples are engaged in research, the questions themselves are different.

So! Nothing about us without us. But! Here I am, a non-Aboriginal and non-Torres Strait Islander scholar working on Indigenous Australian writing, a non-iTaukei scholar working on Fijian writing, and a non-Kanaka scholar working on Hawaiian writing. I do have lived and accountable relationships with Indigenous people in each of these sites, and in specific contexts I am happy to outline these in ways I hope are generative and respectful rather than defensive and appropriative. Even though I did not just pick the four sites of my project at random, however, I'm still an outsider to three of these communities. And, I am Māori, but I am affiliated to specific *iwi*/tribes, so I am an outsider to many Māori texts and contexts, too. So, "nothing about us without us" is meaningful for work connected to the trunk of the tree, but for the branches I argue that we need collaborative relationship-based work. I think Indigenous scholars should be central to the branch work as well as the trunk work: the division of labour cannot be "Natives do the genealogies of their own people and settlers do the cool transnational networks." When Linda describes "branches that spread everywhere," she emphasises the dynamic, multi-layered, interlocked network of which she is a part. We risk thinking we are engaging in intellectual sovereignty by only researching "our own" but in a way that actually affirms the logics of our occupying settler states, agreeing with Subramani that settler state borders reign supreme, not noticing or responding to the many ways in which the branches are already so closely intertwined, and leaving Indigenous sites without specific expertise or resourcing to fend for themselves. And focusing only on "our own" may well mean that as Indigenous literary scholars we collectively miss opportunities to pose for photos during tea-break chats that produce impossible photographs that, after enough connections and reconnections, will feel like *possible* photographs. When we study Indigenous nodes but not Indigenous networks, we miss the opportunity to learn about each other and ourselves in new ways. As Fijian poet and lawyer Pio Manoa wrote in 1976: "the more we read poems from the other islands the more we get a sense of belonging together" (Manoa, 1976; 61).

## Australia and the Pacific: "Belonging Together"?

What forms of "belonging together" are there between Australia and the Pacific? Why should expertise in the Pacific be considered a vital part of Australian literary studies? How, and why, could the impossible photograph become the possible photograph? The late Melbourne-based Fijian historian Tracey Banivanua-Mar had a clear vision of the connections between the histories of places now chopped up by twenty-first century imaginaries. Teaching alongside Indigenous Australian thinkers as a Melanesian person, she reckoned throughout her too-short scholarly career with Pacific presence in, and connections to, Australia. Of her sole-authored monographs, her first book focused on South Sea Islanders and Blackbirding and her second, published shortly before her passing in 2017, is the phenomenal *Decolonisation and the Pacific*. Banivanua-Mar traces the divisions in the Pacific region that have been reinforced by separations between the politically "independent" Pacific (such as Fiji) and the parts of the region still under formal external colonial rule or living in settler colonialism (such as New Zealand, Hawai'i, and Australia). Following Banivanua-Mar's lead, I wish to recite the names of Pacific branches we might think of as reaching out for Australian branches; some Australian branches, reciprocally, reach out to the Pacific. The degree of detail below about each branch should not be understood as a comment on the complexity or significance of that branch. I hope these gestures will, however, make visible and invite other scholarly engagements alongside those that are becoming familiar. How, to extend Pio Manoa's framing, might Australia and the Pacific "get a sense of belonging together" by reading "poems from the other islands?"

The home islands of several Indigenous Pacific communities are located within the current territorial boundaries of Australia. The Torres Strait Islands are culturally and historically part of the Melanesian region. Not seeking in any way to undermine Torres Strait Islander claims and connections with the state of Australia or with Aboriginal communities, or indeed to overstate the utility of anthropological framing of "-nesias" in the region, I suggest that an important additional possibility for engaging Torres Strait Islander writing is to read those texts in relation to the Pacific. I have taught *Butterfly Song* beside *Benang*, but it could just as beautifully sit alongside the Tom and Lydia Davis novel *Makutu* (Cook Islands), the Victoria Kneubuhl novel *Murder Casts a Shadow* (Hawaiian/Sāmoan), or indeed Brandy Nalani McDougall's poem "Lei Niho Palaoa" (Hawaiian). The forced migration of Pacific peoples to Australia through the process of Blackbirding has produced the longstanding South Sea Islander communities in Australia but also recollections of enslavement and indenture all around the Pacific region both from "source" islands of plantation labourers and from other Pacific sites (including Sāmoa, Fiji, Hawai'i).

Another Pacific site long part (and yet not part) of Australia's political boundaries is the Norfolk Islands. Currently an external Territory of Australia, Norfolk Island has complicated and rich connections with the region especially (although not only) through the presence of Pitkern islanders (themselves descendants of Tahitian people) who migrated there in the mid-nineteenth century. Its connection with Australia is also complex: it has served as a site for primary production, incarceration and leisure. Since 2016, Norfolk Island's previous forms of limited self-government were quashed, against the preferences of local people on the island, and decision-making powers were shifted to New South Wales. How might it be possible, or controversial, to engage Norfolk/Pitkern writing in the context of, or alongside, Australian literature and Indigenous Australian literature?

Australia has a long legacy of colonialism in the Pacific, most prominently Papua New Guinea but also other islands. There is a huge corpus of writing by PNG people both in PNG and in Australia, stretching from the 1932 autobiography *The Erstwhile Savage* by Ligeremaluoga to the Queensland-based Jacaranda Press that published many key PNG texts including Vincent Eri's 1970 novel *The Crocodile,* and in many periodicals produced here in Australia and there in what is now PNG. How quickly we naturalise contemporary borders of settler states by pruning colonies from how we remember who those states were (and who was forced to be part of those states) through the twentieth century. When I was just a short way into "Writing the New World" I realised that in the period 1900 - 1975 it should be impossible to talk about Indigenous texts connected to Australia without recognising PNG as part of Australia through that period; likewise, the Cook Islands, Sāmoa, Niue, and Tokelau when talking about New Zealand, and indeed Rotuma when talking about Fiji. Connected to its colonial role in the Pacific, Australia has played an ongoing role in regional Pacific organisations. Australia was a major player of the

South Pacific Commission (an organisation established by the "Canberra Agreement" and from which the Australia-edited review periodical *Pacific Reading* emerged), and Sydney was the editorial base for *Pacific Islands Monthly*, the vast and unique regional commercial magazine which has produced an incredible archive of work about and by the region. The contribution of *PIM* to the story of Pacific literature is well known in the region: in the early 1970s, Crocombe collaborated with *PIM* to produce a guest-edited section called *Mana* for Pacific writers and this led to the journal *Mana* and to the more sustained publishing arm of the Fiji-based South Pacific Creative Arts Society. So many Australia-based companies and organisations have published key original texts and translations for distribution around the Pacific.

The migration by "choice" of Pacific peoples to Australia either directly from the Pacific region or as a part of migration patterns from New Zealand (in racist immigration speak this is referred to as "back door" migration) has provided another shelf to the Australian bookcase of Pacific writing. Single-author publications by Pacific people who live in Australia include the novels of Celestine Hitiura Vaite (Tahitian), poetry by Lili Tuwai (Fijian), poetry and non-fiction by Evelyn Patuawa-Nathan and Jean Riki (NZ Māori), and literary contributions of people like Winnie Akata Siulolovao Dunn (Tongan) at Sweatshop in Western Sydney. Dunn's 2017 article "From Pacific to Pasifika" in *Sydney Review of Books* is a foundational piece about Pacific representation and writing in Australia (Dunn, 2017). As more Pacific people are working in Australian universities and cultural institutions, our collective understanding of Pacific presence and contributions to Australia has expanded. A key site where this work is occurring is the Oceania Working Party of the Dictionary of Australian Biography, chaired by Professor Katerina Teaiwa (Banaban / i-Kiribati / African American). In terms of Māori literary history in Australia, which has overlapping but also specific stories to tell, I have written elsewhere about how, by the time Māori children read and wrote in the first mission schools in Aotearoa, there had already been Māori people writing in Norfolk Island and, yes, in Australia (mostly Parramatta). As well as writing by Pacific people who have migrated to Australia, there are long histories of Pacific travel to Australia. To choose a few examples: Tupaia on Cook's ship, who sketched Aboriginal people he saw here; Māori people who have been present in Parramatta, Sydney, and surrounding areas since the early nineteenth century; Sāmoan missionaries en route to or from what is now Papua New Guinea; and Rotuman minister Fuata Taito's direct descendant Mere Taito is engaging with his 1940s published memoirs *My Own Story* and *The Aborigines of the North* in her PhD thesis.

As well as tracing the mobility of Australian borders into the Pacific, and of Pacific people to Australia, intellectual and creative movements reconfigured the relationship between Australia and the Pacific. Paying attention to intellectual and political movements, in his *Pasifika Black*, Bermudian scholar Quito Swann traces the movement of Black internationalism through the Pacific region and moves between communities articulating themselves as "Black" in the islands conventionally understood as Pacific as well as in Australia. In this light, the artificial borders between "Australia" and "Pacific" are rendered less important than networks of connection on the basis of Blackness. Likewise, in literary collaborations and anthologies produced in Australia and elsewhere, Indigenous Australian voices sit alongside voices from other Pacific peoples: consider the special issue of *Ora Nui* edited by Anton Blank and Kerry Reed-Gilbert that brought together Māori and Indigenous Australian writers in a range of genres; the "Honouring Words" and "Honouring Theatre" collaborations with Indigenous writers or theatre practitioners from Australia, New Zealand, and Canada; and the anthologies *Skins: Contemporary Indigenous Writing* and *Without Reservation: Indigenous Erotica*. More recently, Dunn's 2022 anthology *Another Australia* again brings Indigenous Australian and Pacific voices (on the basis of being "writers of colour") together.

Can Australian Literary Studies really say it knows Australia if there is so little formal, critical, or institutional commitment to all of this Indigenous Pacific writing? Is it really possible to teach or write about twentieth-century Australian literature and not mention Papua New Guinea? Who, will undertake the research, teaching, service, and institutional work, that traces connections between Pacific and Indigenous Australian literary worlds when no one has been hired in an Australian university specifically to teach Pacific literatures? Literary scholars Mandy Treagus and Paul Sharrad have done a huge amount of teaching and supervision in the context of their work as a Victorianist and Postcolonialist respectively; other literary scholars may teach and research some Pacific texts, and Katerina Teaiwa teaches Pacific creative texts within the Pacific Studies programming at the ANU. How, then, might we in literary studies generatively grapple with the relationship between Indigenous peoples from Australia and Indigenous peoples from the Pacific?

## Reading as "Cousins"

When I encountered the impossible photograph, I had already been interested in Noonuccal's 1973 article "Aboriginal Literature," where she writes: "It would also be to our benefit to meet with and know writers of New Zealand and the Pacific and of other lands where the indigene has made his or her way into the field of literature" (Noonuccal, 1973; 9). The "our" of "our benefit" here is Aboriginal. The article itself is a published version of an oral presentation Noonuccal gave that year at the first Aboriginal Arts Seminar in Canberra. The introduction to the issue of *New Dawn* in which Noonuccal's essay appears recalls the seminar as having brought together 200 people—including Māori, Native American, Indian, African and Papua New Guinean. In her essay, Noonuccal writes:

> In looking at the New Zealand and Pacific field, last year, I came back to Australia with a feeling of excited expectation at what I had seen there. Poets and writers are really emerging and we should be encouraging Australia to accept responsibility not only to Australian indigenes but also our Indigenous *cousins* of other countries as well (1973; 9, my italics).

(*Cousins. We'll come back to this word.*) Just one year earlier, in September to October 1972, Noonuccal had toured around New Zealand under the auspices of the Citizen's Association for Racial Equality; in the same year, she was a guest lecturer of USP in Fiji, and earlier in 1973 she had attended the Third Niugini Arts Festival.

I initially went to the Fryer Library because I wanted to find out more about Noonuccal's trips to other places. There was plenty to find. For example, a boarding pass for an Air Pacific flight to (or from or inside) Fiji was tucked inside a paper conference program from January 1980: the fifth triennial conference of the Association for Commonwealth Language and Literary Studies (ACLALS), an academic association formed in 1964 that is widely recalled as one of the initial sites of academic engagement with the literatures of the postcolonial world. At that ACLALS conference in Suva, which attracted scholars from around the world who were working on African, Pacific, Indigenous, South Asian, Caribbean, and settler writing at a wide range of institutions, she participated in the first of two plenary sessions titled “The Writer’s View of Commonwealth Literature.” The session was chaired by Albert Wendt (Sāmoan writer, artist, and educator based at USP) and included Subramani (Indo-Fijian literary scholar based at USP), Pio Manoa (Indigenous Fijian poet and lawyer mentioned above), Olaf Ruhen (Australian writer), and Les Murray (Australian poet). Whenever she travelled to Suva, Noonuccal was connected with a community of Indigenous writers and educators connected to the South Pacific Creative Arts Society (SPCAS). This Society had actually emerged in 1972 in response to the very successful first South Pacific Arts Festival hosted by Fiji the same year. When the first issue of the multi-genre SPCAS publication *Mana*, edited by Cook Islander Marjorie Crocombe, was published in 1973 after much of its content had previously been published in the Sydney-produced *Pacific Islands Monthly* mentioned above, it included a poem by Jack Davis with the note “Mr Davis, An Australian Aboriginal author and poet, wrote this poem when he left Fiji after the South Pacific Festival of Arts in May, 1972.” So, Davis had been in Fiji too, hanging out with “Indigenous cousins of other countries,” as Noonuccal puts it, and is also inextricable from the origins of SPCAS.

Davis’s poem “Farewell Fiji” articulates points of connection and departure between the islands of Fiji and his home. The poem treats Fiji in the first stanza and Australia in the second before making a final move back to his present liminal position in the last two lines: “So with a jet’s roar / Goodbye beautiful Fiji” (Davis, 1973; lines 17, 18). The pivot between the two – which also serves as a point of connection – occurs at the end of the first stanza where modes of colonial rule are directly compared: “The calm of the resident European / I mean, home he is always frantic” (lines 6, 7), and this pivot is affirmed in the opening of the second stanza: “But I am not for adoption. / I love my land” (lines 8, 9). The contrast between the two sites is not only due to differing colonial patterns: the “beaut[y]” of Fiji is contrasted with the harshness of Australia (“Harsh, dominant.”); while Fiji may be “beautiful” it is less familiar than Australia and unnamed Fijian “mountains” in the first stanza stand alongside named sites in the second: “Ayers Rock, the Olga’s / Rising up, indomitable” (lines 13, 14). Indeed, while Fiji is described mostly in terms of sound (“soft voices,” “whispering,” “laughter,” “calm”), Australia is described in relation to visuality and movement: “dominant,” “Moulder of men,” “rising up,” “Kaleidoscopic in the summer haze.” When the final lines of the poem return to the moment of Davis’s departure/return, we find him viewing Australia, his cherished “land,” from the tarmac (“with a jet’s roar”) from a perspective that has been made possible by his time in Fiji. The poem offers an example of ethical Indigenous connection: graciously acknowledging the specificities and “beaut[y]” of the land and people of the place he has been visiting as well as specificities of their respective oppression.

As a scholar of Pacific literatures, my first instinct is to read the poem alongside Hawaiian poet Haunani-Kay Trask’s “Returning the Gift,” which she wrote in response to attending a gathering of Indigenous writers in the US. Like Davis, Trask farewells and memorialises the historic gathering by drawing attention to connections but also playing up differences both of landscape and of experience. Neither poem is saying “my country is better than yours.” Like Davis, her poem of farewell is offered as a gift of thanks and acknowledgement. Someone well versed in Davis's other work may well read the poem in other ways, and this is as it should be. But I also like living in the world where writing by Trask and Davis / Davis and Crocombe / Hawai'i, Fiji and Australia, are in conversation. But on what basis can this conversation work, with a particular balance between resonance and difference?

Let us return to the "cousins' in Noonuccal's phrase above by turning to another text that talks about cousins: a 1979 poem "Education Week" written by Māori poet Evelyn Patuawa-Nathan who was based in Australia at the time. I have spoken about, written about and taught this poem – about a class trip to a local jail for a group of Aboriginal children and their teacher – in a lot of places now. I often encourage readers of the poem to think about the value and remarkable productivity of close observation and careful reading (the kids read the names, the poet/teacher read the kids, and we as readers of the poem read all of this) and I also note that it draws attention to the place of writing – of archives – in Indigenous scholarly and community work. In *Opening Doors*, alongside the many poems based in Aotearoa and within specifically Māori contexts, there are four poems focused on Australia: two about Māori experiences in (actually, burial in) Australia, and two that represent perspectives of Aboriginal people and critique the colonial state while centring Indigenous agency. Years earlier, in 1960, Patuawa-Nathan wrote a lengthy obituary and artistic biography of Albert Namatjira for *Te Ao Hou,* a New Zealand state magazine for Māori. So, she had been thinking and writing about points of connection between Māori and Aboriginal people for a while. [1]

The kids in "Education Week" identify "names" (proximity, genealogy, family, ancestry) among "comments" and then "reach" for them. By the end of the poem the "reaching" of the Indigenous children towards the writing of their own relatives reframes the space from one of disconnection to one of connection and agency. Even in empty, tightly controlled, violent, impossibly imperial spaces, there is always prior Indigenous presence, and this presence can be reframed and multiple. I draw attention to the echo of the word "reach" from when Linda recites her genealogy in *Mutuwhenua* and says "every branch reaches out" (Grace, 1978; 101). Like Linda, these children engage in a self-conscious and deliberate act of genealogising. Neither Linda in *Mutuwhenua* nor the speaker in Patuawa-Nathan's poem describe accidental proximity. As with Linda and her grandmother, the utterance or reading of names profoundly restructures and realigns significant family relationships. As with Linda who doesn't argue for the merits of her white fiancé but focuses instead on the multidimensional Indigenous network of which she is a part, the children standing in the "bare concrete cell" centre Indigenous relationships through deliberately connecting with multigenerational genealogies ("cousins / and brothers / and fathers") that in turn decentre non-Indigenous over-writing of the space *even as it provides*, as a by-product rather than the goal, new perspectives from which to engage non-Indigenous encounters with Indigenous peoples. These final three lines of the poem are structured according to three different kinds of close family relationship. The kids "reach"

> for names of cousins
> and brothers
> and fathers.
> (Patuawa-Nathan, 1979; lines 12–14)

I like thinking about the final word “fathers” standing in for ancestry, genealogy, history - this is the primary reconnection that occurs and is centred in this space - the thing that is *learned* in education week despite the plans of the state or the town or the teacher to structure the intellectual and moral knowledge experienced. The aspirations of the settler “education” system are eclipsed by the aspirations of young Indigenous people whose capacity to read and reach turns empty space (*terra nullius*) back into ancestral and family space. But what about the brothers and cousins? Why are they there? And, what do “cousins” add that “brothers” don’t already suggest in terms of generational proximity?

Cousins are relatives with whom you share one family network, but not another. In some contexts, your cousins may be like close siblings, and in others you may feel like virtual strangers. The cousin relationship speaks to connection on the basis of certain familiarity, but without forcing different Indigenous peoples to pretend that all of our experiences are comparable or familiar or legible or even visible to each other. With a nod to Noonuccal, I have been thinking about cousins as a way of thinking about Indigenous–Indigenous connections. The possibility of the concept was originally prompted in response to a passage in Tahitian novelist Chantal Spitz’s 1991 novel, published in English in 2007 as *Island of Shattered Dreams*. The central character Tetiare spends years travelling around the Pacific region in search of what Spitz describes as “cousins”:

> Tetiare has finally come home, after years of wandering round the Pacific, in a vain attempt to heal the wound in her soul. She has met the *cousins* who came with them long ago in their big canoes, born of the same dream of freedom, but who stopped where the wind had blown them on tiny hopeful islands, over the centuries forgetting the ones who journeyed further. She has found them again, so similar in body and soul, yet made different by the various foreign governments that have been squatting on their land. She has discovered them, peoples of the first people, attempting through little disorganised movements to shake off the Foreigner and immerse themselves again in their origins, to be themselves, the lost children of this huge family in search of one another (Spitz, 2007; 121, my italics).

The cousins in *Island of Shattered Dreams* are deeply connected, but their connection is produced by acknowledging, rather than sidestepping, differences that are produced by two distinct processes: their cultural and historical contexts connected to the deepest histories (“origins”) of the region; and the ways they have been “made different” by the foreign governments “squatting on their land.” For Tetiare, Indigenous connection is not coincidental, disinterested, or accidental. Her connection with Indigenous people from across the region is consciously motivated and reciprocal and its purpose is “to heal the wound in her soul;” the restoration of these Indigenous links is both the foundation and purpose of decolonisation: “the lost children of this huge family in search of one another.”

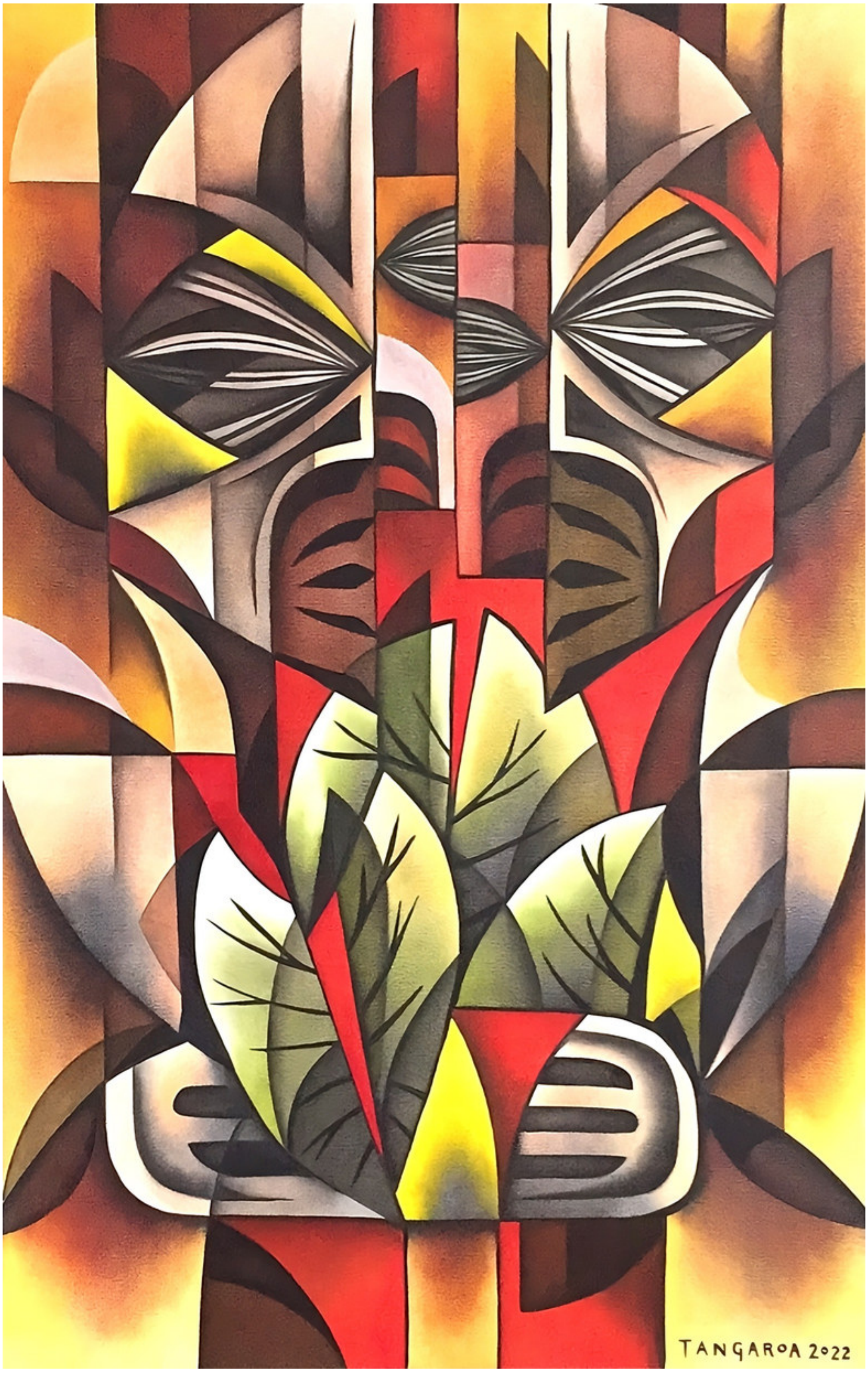
To be clear, then, I am proposing that “cousins” (Noonuccal’s “cousins,” Patuawa-Nathan’s “cousins,” Spitz’s “cousins,” Linda’s cousins as lateral branches) could be a close-enough-yet-loose-enough relationship to enable us to think productively and ethically about Indigenous–Indigenous connections. In the context of Pacific literary studies and Indigenous Australian literary studies in particular, our respective worlds overlap, connect, resonate, and “reach” in more ways than we might have considered. And, what's more, this reaching has been reciprocal: some aspects of Pacific writing are connected to Australia, and some Indigenous Australian writing sits on Pacific metaphoric (and perhaps physical) bookshelves. We don't often see "our" texts on each other's bookshelves. Some reasons for this are theoretical and methodological. Some are pedagogic. But some are pragmatic.

I present these thoughts hoping that they make a contribution to how we collectively think about the Study of Australian Literatures, and also with the hope they are heard unequivocally as being in solidarity with Indigenous sovereignty in this place. Certainly, Pacific literary studies should never be weaponised against Indigenous literary studies in Australia. I am not arguing for crumbs from the table that should have been diverted to Indigenous literary studies to go to the Pacific instead. I am saying: don't make us scrap over crumbs. I am asking: what kind of loaf of bread are you even cutting in Australian literary studies? I have made a deliberate decision to not write directly about Mabo here. Instead, I have written in response to, in acknowledgement of, and in solidarity with the Mabo decision. I've made an argument about what becomes visible when we turn down the volume on state boundaries and turn the volume up on the transnational conversations in which Indigenous communities have been engaged for so long. Hopefully, this will also set the scene for interesting thinking about potential further conversations *and actions* in the future. Mabo demands a change in power relations and control over resources. It is also surely about the many worlds that are possible when we understand there is an absolute forest of Indigenous literary trees here, there, and everywhere . . . with so many branches reaching out, touching every other.

*i used to want to tell them to move over because they take up all the room*
*but there's no room*
*there is no room*

*no walls, no room—just links and connections and space*

*you're not at the centre; there are no centres*
*you're just standing there*
*one node in a massive network*
*like the rest of us*


TANGAROA 2022

*"Contemplating a Future of Mankind" by Mahiriki Tangaroa, 2022*
*(photo - courtesy of the artist)*

## Notes

[1] I want to be very clear that although I am proposing some ways of reading this poem, we will not sidestep the fact that this poem is about Indigenous incarceration. I am deeply mindful that when I delivered the lecture on which this essay is based I stood on an island that has served both nation and empire as a carceral space in particular and violent ways, and although I am here teasing out possible metaphoric work the poem can do, it would be unethical and complicit to proceed without noticing and naming and refusing to sidestep the ways that "local jail[s]" and "small concrete cell[s]" function not just as a site but as a tool of ongoing colonialism and genocide – and Indigenous death – in Australia.

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## About the author

Professor Alice Te Punga Somerville (Māori – Te Āti Awa, Taranaki) is a scholar, poet and irredentist and currently the Head and Professor of the Department of English Language and Literatures at the University of British Columbia. She has previously taught in Australia, Hawai'i and New Zealand. Her current research project focuses on published writing by Indigenous people from New Zealand, Australia, Hawai'i and Fiji between 1900-1975. She is the author of *Once Were Pacific: Maori connections to Oceania* which won Best First Book 2012 from Native American & Indigenous Studies Association, and *250 Ways to Write an Essay about Captain Cook* (2020). Her collection of poetry (Auckland Uni Press, 2022) is called *Always Italicise: how to write while colonised*. Alice serves on the editorial boards of several academic journals and is the editor of the *Journal of New Zealand Literature.*

*Kevin and Molingi Nato, Pukapuka, 1989 (photo - the authors).*

# Reflections on a Cross-cultural Odyssey

## KEVIN AND MARY SALISBURY

*Kia orana, e kia manuia tātou kātoatoa i te aro'a nui o te Atua.*
*Te rekareka nei māua i tō tātou āravei'anga i te āti'anga nei*
*kia akama'ara'ia te va'ine toa a Marjorie Tua'inekore Crocombe.*

## Tribute

It is our great pleasure to share some reminiscences about our friends, Marjorie and Ron. We first met them in their home at Nika'o, Rarotonga, on our return from Pukapuka in 1989. Then we saw Marjorie more frequently when she was the first Director of the Centre for Pacific Studies at Auckland University from 1990 to 1993. Over the years, Marjorie and Ron greatly encouraged our work on Pukapuka culture and language development. They expressed a keen interest in hearing about our experiences and research and provided support to us in our aspirations for the development of cultural and educational resources for the Pukapuka people. In December 2004, they readily accepted the invitation to attend the launching of the Pukapuka Bible Translation project in Rarotonga.

We celebrate Marjorie's outstanding contribution to the teaching of Cook Islands Māori and especially her role in the establishment of the Diploma for Pacific Vernacular Languages: Cook Islands Māori, which was taught in Rarotonga for the first time in 2017. I (Mary) was a tutor for the linguistics papers in the Diploma, and Marjorie and I had many discussions with the first cohort of students regarding language use, dialectal differences, and orthography issues. The initiative quickly spread, and vernacular language papers are now offered in Cook Islands Māori, Tongan and Niuafo'ou, Vagahau Niue, and Vanuatu Language Studies at the University of the South Pacific (USP).

Marjorie's pioneering work in mission history documented the life and work of early Cook Islands pastors (including Ruatoka, Ta'unga, and Maretu). Her research to discover and translate unpublished manuscripts was thorough, particularly in the era before microfilm copies were available. She also did primary research in the early 1960s in Papua New Guinea for her first significant work, 'Ruatoka'. [1] This study of the early years of the pioneer group of Cook Islands *'orometua* included the first biography of a Pacific Islands missionary. From that time, she also worked with Ron and others on a five-year research project, culminating in the publication of *The Works of Ta'unga* by ANU Press in 1968. [2] Harry Maude noted in the Foreword,

> The annotated collection of the writings of Ta'unga represented a breakthrough, being the first book by a nineteenth-century author from central or western Polynesia to be published, and the first by any Pacific islander to be written about any country other than his own.

*Dr. Mary Salisbury, Dr. Joe Williams, Kevin Salisbury, Prof. Jon Jonassen, Emeritus Professor Ron Crocombe, Jill Williams, Rutera Taripo, Marjorie Crocombe at the Inaugural Conference of the Cook Islands Research Association, Rarotonga, 2008 (photo - Karin Williams)*

The other major work on the writings of Maretu of Ngātangi'ia was *Cannibals and Converts: Radical Change in the Cook Islands.*[3] These studies required a broad understanding of places and cultural contexts: Maretu's work was on Rarotonga, Mangaia, and Manihiki, while Ta'unga's experiences were in New Caledonia, New Hebrides, and Sāmoa. It was entirely reasonable that the Crocombes published the works of Ta'unga and Maretu in translation alone. That itself was an important achievement in that era. Yet the authors' voices will not be fully heard until the original manuscripts are transcribed, edited, and published.

The growing concern for preservation of indigenous texts provides the impetus for a new generation of speakers of Cook Islands Māori to engage with these documents. Indeed, the stories of 500 Cook Islands men and women who served in cross-cultural situations have yet to be researched adequately. In 2007, Marjorie asked, "What can you find out about my *tupuna* Marama who served as a pioneer in Samoa?" Eventually, Kevin found a short section in a large volume on Samoan mission history. [4] Surely the voluminous records of the London Missionary Society [5] contain sufficient material to bring to light Marama's career as a pastor and educator spanning 30 years.

## Reflections

Looking back on our association with the people of Pukapuka over the past 49 years, we recognise the factors in our upbringing that were conducive to making the transition to a new culture. Our lives have also been shaped through our close association with Pukapuka communities. Our core values place a high priority on relationships, hospitality, and generosity. We are very relaxed about time; we know how to fall asleep discreetly in an extended meeting, to wait patiently, and to drop everything for a *mate* (bereavement). We are immeasurably grateful for the patience and acceptance shown to us as *papaa* (foreigners) throughout our adult lives. *Ko kena te pākili, yaulā ko weweu te ngākau* ('our skins are white, yet our hearts are brown'). Although outsiders, we deeply identify with our Pukapuka family and friends and value the way in which Pukapukan people everywhere have adopted us. Now, we are meeting grandchildren and great-grandchildren of those we knew in the 1970s and 1980s, who carry the names of our dear friends.

The various strands of our lives have been woven together like a *pānga* (pandanus mat). The edges are not always straight when a novice weaves, and it is only when the mat is nearly complete that the patterns emerge and its beauty can be perceived. The beginning strands of academic studies in our youth, researching the music and language of Pukapuka, are weft inseparably with lasting friendships in the communities. Desire to assist with development of resources in the language is woven with joint musical compositions and production of numerous booklets on culture and history. Threaded throughout like a *tauwenu* (contrasting strand of pandanus inserted for the pattern) from the strong fibres of the *yulu* (pandanus palm) is a commitment to translate the Bible, inserted securely by *tupuna* (ancestors), [6] overlaid on our own aspirations and knit together with the skills and dedication of many who followed. The pattern of the *kave* (design) is a tribute to the mastery and dedication of our loved brothers and sisters, colleagues and friends, a *pānga* expressive of deep emotion to the master weaver.

As I (Kevin) review the span of almost five decades, I ponder on the antecedents that led to a lifetime of cross-cultural research and service. Growing up in a monocultural milieu north of Wellington, I had little contact with other cultures. But in Social Studies, we listened with awe about Te Rauparaha whose exploits had caused widespread alarm in the region over a century previously. In Form 1, a Māori girl, Moana, joined our class, and a relieving teacher taught us pronunciation of Māori. By this time, I had read a number of stories about missionary outreach in the Pacific and beyond. And each October, our Boys' Brigade (BB) Company attended the Founder's Day Parade, when we each took a shilling for the offering towards the work of the BB in the Pacific Islands, especially the Cook Islands.

Languages fascinated me from an early age. Listening to the news read in Māori on my grandfather's radio at 6 pm was an early influence, as I heard the resonant tones and measured phrases of Te Reo. I eagerly learnt French in Form 3 and began to teach myself Latin the following year after shifting to Auckland. Learning translation skills in these languages through high school and at university paved the way for my adult engagement with Polynesian languages. Besides majoring in Music and Ethnomusicology, I completed my degree with papers in NZ and Pacific History, Māori Studies, and Social Anthropology. A new world opened to me as I listened intently to Anne Salmond's intriguing lectures on Māori culture and history

*Atawua and Nga Robati, Auckland 1976*

*Mary and Mama Koyi, Pukapuka 2004*

and read the primary documents, while Bruce Biggs' insightful approach to understanding Māori grammar laid a solid foundation for my future research in related languages. I well remember grappling with issues of injustice and equity as I delved into the history of several Māori prophetic movements for Anthropology and History assignments.

At this time, I attended a group called "Young Wycliffe" which focused on serving the educational needs of the unwritten languages of the world. Along with several friends, I spent the long vacation studying at the South Pacific Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), held at the University of New South Wales in Sydney. And so it was in January 1975 that I looked at the *Ethnologue*, a listing of all known languages of the world, and found the unwritten languages of the northern Cook Islands: they were noted as being "mutually unintelligible with Rarotongan" and their Bible translation need was "undetermined". On return to Auckland, I shared this news with my fianceé, Mary. When we rang the Reverend Challis [7] at the Pacific Islanders' Church in Newton, he tried to dissuade us in our quest to find a language needing Bible translation. Undeterred, we politely insisted that he give us a contact person, and we were directed to Dean Marsters who was scheduled to lead a church service in Mangere that Sunday. But that elder suggested that we go and visit the President of the Pukapuka community, Atawua Robati.

Our welcome at Brentwood Avenue, Mt Eden, in May 1975 was gratifying. Atawua and his wife Nga showed great interest in our quest to study their language. Soon Mary began learning Pukapukan with Atawua, and she completed her first sketches of the phonology and grammar for assignments for her Linguistics courses at university. In October, Atawua translated the first portion of Scripture, "The Parable of the Scattered Seed", which Mary got printed on a gestetner duplicator, courtesy of her pastor in the church office. In 1977, Atawua and a group of about six men began to translate the Gospel of Luke. They met weekly in his office at St James Presbyterian Church in Mt Eden, completing it in manuscript form the following year.

In December 1978, we enrolled together in the SIL advanced course in Sydney, and took a teenager, Nuku Rapana, from the Pukapukan community in Auckland to assist us. We recorded his oral language samples in different genres, and transcribed and analysed them for our coursework. To our great surprise, we met a student from the Cook Islands. Ron Crocombe had met Dr Kemp Pallesen, the SIL Pacific Area Director, who had recommended the introductory course for his son, Graham Taturoanui (Tata). Word of the "Pukapuka presence" at the linguistic school undoubtedly filtered back to Marjorie and Ron.

For two years, we continued with postgraduate courses, Mary studying Linguistics, and Kevin studying Ethnomusicology, with a view to a thesis on Pukapukan music. In 1981, we shifted to the inner city to live in close proximity to several households and continue learning the language and culture. [8] Mary recorded women's speech and stories from men and continued her analysis of the grammar. The widely esteemed composer Karitua Makuare assisted Kevin with recordings of most musical genres, both traditional and acculturated. Close bonds that developed with our Pukapukan neighbours continue to this day.

In October that year, Karitua's elderly father on Pukapuka made the first call on the new radio telephone, asking him to come to visit. We jumped at the chance of accompanying him, and a month later we found ourselves on Rarotonga, leaving the same day on the inter-island freighter as it made its way slowly northwest for five days. With Karitua as our leader and advisor, we related easily to the tight-knit community. Within a couple of days, rehearsals of *īmene tuki* (hymn singing) commenced for the Christmas and New Year singing events. We already knew several of Karitua's compositions made for his church and Ngake village group in Auckland. Kevin sat in the front row on the men's side with Karitua, with Mary, Karitua's partner Titaa, and the other women facing us. As others joined at each successive practice, all the Ngake villagers were astounded that the newcomers were singing the *īmene* confidently from memory. Word soon got around the whole island that the *papa'ā* couple could sing their songs.

Kevin's music research as a participant-observer was satisfying and rewarding. The *īmene tuki* celebrations of the festive season were followed by the inter-village sports tournament. Here the fall of each wicket was marked by a humorous chant, and spontaneous songs were sung after the close of play each day. At the wrestling contest, *tila* (victory chants) were performed by the village that had won the bout. Then followed a whole afternoon of celebrations by the village with the highest tally from the many sports over the previous fortnight.

Leading up to the deep-sea fishing contest, I (Kevin) set about copying texts of traditional chants from exercise books that people were willing to loan to me. By the end of our four month stay, I had acquired a list of about 100 *mako* chants. For the *Kavekave* fishing contest, I placed three tape recorders to simultaneously capture the fishing chants performed at the three village meeting houses throughout the night. Again, the genres changed as I watched the winning village rehearsing their *pātautau* (celebratory songs) for the celebrations on the third day, when they derided and ridiculed the two losing villages.

Then in the copra-making season on Motu Ko, I recorded Mama Molingi, Nimeti, and Apela chanting the Tamanu and Tuyiyauola love chant cycles. The texts of these illustrious chants had been written by Talainga for the Beagleholes in 1935 and typed by Pearl for their manuscript. [9] On our second field trip in 1989, Molingi Nato (aged 86) willingly dictated scores of these long chants, explaining the meanings of obscure passages and words, and giving the matrilineal affiliations of composers and recipients. It was an unforgettable experience working with an extremely intelligent woman with an encyclopedic knowledge of oral traditions and chants. Our warm friendship was mutual, as we recall her emotional farewell to us on our last day. Her outstanding contribution to the work of recording, transcribing, and documenting traditional chants is perpetuated in a large corpus totalling over 80,000 words. Textual analysis up to the present reveals symbolic complexity associated with the matrilineal clans, and an extraordinary network of ancient place names covering all of Polynesia and beyond.

Our initial rapport on the island was enhanced by the presence of our children, whose white hair often elicited comments regarding it being ideal for making fishing lures. David learned to swim in the lagoon, while Miriam took her first steps on the island. On our second trip, with the addition of Jonathan, the children quickly became fluent in Pukapukan, the youngest being renowned for his slightly impudent responses to teasing. David was old enough to accompany a trusted friend, Rimapeni on fishing expeditions beyond the reef. Interspersed with supervising correspondence lessons for the children each morning and cooking over an open fire or in an

*Leaving Pukapuka, April 1982 (photo - the authors)*

*imu* (ground oven), Mary recorded conversations, narratives, sermons, prayers, and traditional tales with the aim of collecting examples of spontaneous speech from a range of people for linguistic analysis of the grammar.

A natural outcome of our first research trip was a desire to assist with development of language resources. The school teachers presented us with the dictionary manuscript that they had compiled with the anthropologist Robert Borofsky, [10] and requested our help to enlarge and publish it. A major reason for returning to the island in 1989 was to collaborate with the teachers on the dictionary project and the development of language materials for the school. A children's story writing competition for each grade was sponsored to generate resources. Mary also worked with Atawua's brother, Rautana Robati, editing traditional stories that the Beagleholes had collected. Mataora Tutai, a senior teacher, returned with us on the same boat, retiring to New Zealand where he compiled two booklets of traditional tales with accompanying comprehension questions for use in the school.

The orthography taught in the school and used in the dictionary indicated vowel length with double vowels. [11] It soon became apparent that long words with unwieldy combinations of as many as four contiguous vowels were difficult to read and so we found ourselves as somewhat reluctant participants in discussions about language policy. The Ministry of Education had previously mandated the teaching of the vernacular in the school, but there were no resources and little guidance given to the teachers. At some point during 1989, the teachers at Niua School made the decision to use macrons instead of the double vowel orthography. Trial publications were made with minimal use of macrons only on content words that contrasted in vowel length. Later, a decision was made to use the macron consistently both for grammatical and content words, with the only exception being phonologically predictable lengthening of vowels that are automatically made by a native speaker. The definitive accent, not found in other languages of the Cook Islands, was distinguished from a long vowel by an acute accent rather than a macron. [12] These decisions were ratified at the Pukapukan International Leaders' Conferences held in Auckland in 2002 and on the island itself in January 2004. Attempts were also made to relay the decisions to the Ministry of Education and the Cook Islands Language Commission. It was somewhat humbling and surprising to Mary at the 2018 Pukapuka Conference on Language and Culture held on Rarotonga, when the Pukapuka Member of Parliament Tingika Elikana replied to her question about some remaining issues in orthography, "We leave it to you to decide." Marjorie's work in developing the Diploma of Teaching Cook Islands Māori has greatly facilitated wider discussions regarding conventions for the orthography of the other languages of the Cook Islands, including the marking of vowel length. It is pleasing to realise that the use of the macron in Pukapuka's orthography has been followed in language and educational policies for the whole of the Cook Islands.

## Dictionary and language resources

Spurred on by meeting Marjorie and Ron for the first time in October 1989, we returned to Auckland highly motivated to publish resources in Pukapukan. The first task was to digitise the school dictionary and the teachers' notebooks of additional words and cultural data. Volunteers and paid workers were engaged over several years. We recall that Florence "Johnny" Frisbie helped with the typing during a visit from Dunedin. Several teenage girls assisted with the typing and photocopying of stories for use in Niua School. Two of them were inspired to write original stories or translated texts to supplement those that had been written on Pukapuka. One of them later became a teacher aide and school community worker in Australia, while the other has had a career in early childhood education at the Pukapuka Preschool in Auckland. Both Mataora Tutai, retired teacher from Pukapuka, and Karitua Makuare wrote several stories for children which were published in photocopied format, sent to Pukapuka, and disseminated in the New Zealand and Australian Pukapukan communities.

After our discovery of the Beagleholes' dictionary manuscript tucked away in a cupboard in the library at Victoria University in Wellington, our colleague Mataora Tutai assisted with editing this historical resource. [13] Dictionary work continued through the 1990s, and a bilingual edition was produced in 1999 with an English-Pukapukan finderlist.

We made presentations on the dictionary and language conventions to the conference held on Pukapuka in January 2004. After the departure of the *tele* (tour group) party, we remained behind and were fortunate to take part in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) workshop on invasive species led by Gerald McCormack. Community discussions in workshops were expanded to include ethnoclassification of indigenous names for fishes as well as identification of species and their scientific names. A monetary incentive for each new species caught resulted in both the dictionary and the Cook Islands Biodiversity website being enhanced. [14] At the 2018 Pukapuka Conference held on Rarotonga, a website was launched for language and cultural materials, with the dictionary an important feature. [15]

## *Te Puka Yā*, Pukapuka Bible Translation

In the early 1990s, an interdenominational group of church leaders in Auckland met from time to time at the home of Pastor Eliu (Seventh-Day Adventist) to do a community check of Luke's gospel. Karitua Makuare, one of the initial group who worked under Atawua Robati's leadership, again took up the task of translation from the 1990s after he was made redundant from his job. With a great sense of loss, we buried him next to our son Jonathan in 2001.

Mary completed her degree while tutoring at the University of Auckland, and then teaching linguistics full time at the Albany campus of Massey University. After she submitted her thesis at the end of 2002, she approached Nuku Rapana, the President of the Auckland community, suggesting that it would be timely to recommence the translation project. He took up the invitation with enthusiasm and called a group of people together in early 2003 to begin work. After a successful International Leaders' gathering on Pukapuka in January 2004, the unanimous decision was made by the *Kau Wowolo* (*Aronga Mana,* Council of Elders) and church and community leaders to embark on a Bible translation project to be led from the Auckland community. Before we left the island, we met with a group to translate the Book of Jonah. Kevin returned the following year and the group reconvened to revise the book, finishing just before the cataclysmic Cyclone Percy devastated much of the island. People joked that the 'Jonah' was the cause of the tragedy.

Many challenges have arisen over the course of the Bible translation process. Of course, the flipside is that the challenges presented opportunities for new strategies, compromise, and successful resolution. The journey has been one of ongoing learning, adapting, persevering, and developing close relationships which continue to the present.

### 1. Culturally appropriate ways of working

From the outset, translation has been done by working together as a team, in community, with strategies initiated and determined by Pukapukan leaders. Groups of people working together has predominated as the *modus operandi*. Through every phase and over all decades, consensus of the group has been valued. Admittedly, this has meant that almost every part of the project has taken much longer than one might have anticipated, as we have learned to patiently wait for everyone to express their ideas before consensus is reached and to value the richness of expression as all options are assessed.

The Pukapukan concept of *wakatayi* (togetherness as one) means that no one individual can be seen *kē kakao ki lunga o te toe* (to reach above another). These concepts underpin the importance of working together and making decisions in a group.

The original vision of Atawua Robati was shared unanimously by the first group of elders as they committed themselves to meeting regularly for the same purpose. Much later, the group under Nuku Rapana's leadership met together for ten months early on Monday mornings to learn how to do draft translation, discussing various options for several Psalms and the Lord's Prayer. Even in the peer reviewing stage, we found that a group of translators and peer

*Translation workshop, Auckland, October 2004 (photo - the authors).*

*Translators in Auckland with Wayne Freeman, Director of Wycliffe Bible Translators, November 2016.*
*(Back row) Mary, Ngametua Rivaia, Kevin, Mataa Aumatangi, Walewaoa Teingoa;*
*(Front row) Melota Ngamata, Mailalo Melota, Wayne Freeman, Tianau Nassau (photo - the authors).*

reviewers sometimes took two hours to decide how to translate a single verse, exploring all the nuances of exegesis. The pay-off was discussion of a wealth of synonyms, highlighting the depth of the language's lexicon. To all who participated, it was a rich and diverse experience

The team approach has been balanced by individuals taking initiative and committing themselves to the task. The successful acceptance of the translation project by all communities was largely dependent on the announcement by the President of the Pukapukan people in Auckland, followed by visits to communities in New Zealand, Australia and Rarotonga to initiate the project and workshops. Individuals who have risen above others to commit themselves have mainly been community or village leaders. Mataa Aumatangi, a former mayor on Pukapuka, said publicly that he would commit himself to the task of translation for the rest of his life. And it was when Nomairaro (Mai) Melota first saw the way in which consensus was being reached in a group, that he recognised that the process needed to be adapted for the project to be completed. It is due to his personal commitment and leadership for more than 15 years that the Puka Yā has now reached the milestone of being published.

A second culturally significant concept utilised as a strategy for translation was one of *tuanga* (sharing out equally). Such food as catches of tuna at the *Kavekave* deep sea fishing competition is traditionally shared amongst *tuanga* groups for the whole island. In 2004, after the official re-launch of the project, those who were selected for the translation team were all given a book each to translate, in a manner quite similar to the *tuanga kai* (food division). [16] At this stage of the work, there were approximately 24 translators in ten different locations. The drafted passages were then discussed in peer review groups to improve the translation.

The drafting stage was a challenging task for many members of the team, as they were expected to work individually, while still in the process of training. Some worked with others to achieve their drafts, others were daunted and their task was completed by peers. Although based in a cultural framework, the strategy of dividing equally was only partially successful; working together as a team was far more comfortable to the majority. In effect, the peer review stage was the stage in which most of the translating and refining took place in groups, rather than by individuals. Workshops for peer review were held in several different locations for training and to inspire the communities.

Many excerpts and daily readings were disseminated and later printouts of the complete New Testament and Psalms at several different stages were given to key leaders in several communities. Community review was only achieved in workshops. No matter how many opportunities were given for individuals to give their responses, suggestions or opinions, almost no recommendations were received. The most successful independent community review workshops were from two locally organised groups: one in Griffith (New South Wales) who met weekly to read through a gospel under local leadership after the final stages of translation were completed, and a group on Pukapuka itself under the leadership of BenjaminaTengere and Mai. Both groups gave invaluable feedback for detailed corrections and improvements.

All communities both in the homeland and the diaspora were contacted and workshops were held on language and translation issues in many locations. The team represented all denominations and included members of the Religious Advisory Committee. Numerous samples of scripture for the *tia* (daily readings) or the lectionary have been distributed.

Leadership and overall governance of the project has changed over recent years. Wycliffe Bible Translators New Zealand (WBTNZ) offered support for the project, which soon led to a close partnership with the Pukapukan community in New Zealand. Both of us joined the organisation and Mai Melota, the team coordinator, joined as an associate member. WBTNZ directors and members have provided pastoral oversight as well as technical assistance, software training, consultant help, and support with publishing. [17]

Following changes in the organisation of the Pukapuka community in New Zealand, Te Wui Aliki o Pukapuka ma Nassau became the *wakamalu* (protection, covering) for the project. We honour the chiefs for their unwavering support. Just before the pandemic, Mai took his father, who was a valuable member of the translation team, together with his family to relocate to Pukapuka. This proved to be important for the process of final community checking on the island and in relating to the chiefly council. By coming under *te mana o te wui aliki* (the aegis of the chiefs), the project has been fully endorsed as a community project, based in the homeland but also for the benefit of all Pukapukans everywhere.

## 2. Translation issues

### *(a) Source texts and sacredness of Scripture: King James Version and Te Bibilia Tapu*

Two of the most pressing issues for the communities, as we remember, were which source text to use for translation and the authority of the Holy Bible as translated in the King James Version (KJV) text and in *Te Bibilia Tapu*. Some people thought that the best practice would be to translate from the KJV text rather than from a modern translation. This issue was more easily navigated, at least in the initial stages of community engagement, as a good translation will go back to the meaning of the original source texts, Greek, Aramaic, and Hebrew, rather than translate directly from English or Rarotongan sources. Resources abound to facilitate this process even if not many members of the team have a background in Biblical languages.

The second issue was a deeply held belief that was harder to address. Some people were initially quite opposed to translating the Scriptures into Pukapukan because their belief was that the Holy Bible was sacred, so that it could not be changed at all. The *mana* of the elders who expressed their desire for a Pukapukan translation was no doubt one of the reasons the dissenters were won over. To be able to read God’s word in the language of the homeland would speak to the heart of all Pukapukan readers and there was a long history of people who had expressed their desire for the scriptures in their own *leo wenua* (vernacular). However, the concept of the sacredness of *Te Bibilia* has created an underlying tension, requiring considerable attention from the team.

### *(b) Style of translation: dynamic versus literal*

Any translation team needs to weigh carefully the issues of accuracy, clarity, and naturalness, together with issues surrounding acceptability to the community. Tension often exists between these principles. The style of translation reflects the balance found between them. For a fully dynamic translation style, the meaning of the text as the original audience understood it is translated appropriately into modern idiomatic language for the target audience. Few of the original forms, idioms, and metaphors remain. Word order and grammatical structure follow the grammatical rules of the target language. Lengthy Greek sentences with many adverbials are broken into shorter sentences. Yet the same message is transferred. There may even be explanatory insertions for information that the original readers would have known implicitly. On the other hand, a literal translation takes the original text and translates it word for word, changing the word order slightly so that it is comprehensible, but literalness is often at the expense of clarity and naturalness in the target language. The translation may sound stilted and not be well understood.

Knowing the Cook Islands traditions of singing the Scriptures in *īmene tuki* and *īmene reo metua* (traditional hymn singing genres), Kevin worked with two elders to translate the Psalms in such a way as to make them singable, while lesser-known words were used to give an aura of the poetic. But what is poetry in Pukapukan? Is it merely the rhythm and metrical devices? *Mako* and *tila* (traditional Pukapukan chanting styles) have cryptic grammatical structures, but this style of language would not be well understood. I (Mary) remember a meeting in Rarotonga where a lady said that the draft of the Psalms she had read was quite different from *te leo Wale* she knew. I think she was saying that there were too many obscure words and difficult metaphors and the meaning was unclear because the sentences were too cryptic. Sentences needed to be restructured, and pronouns that had previously been considered unnecessary were reinstated. Considerable revision of the Psalms was needed for the language to be clear and natural, while still trying to maintain some measure of ease for composers to turn them into songs.

### *(c) Traditional language versus modern language*

Likewise, there was a tension for translators between the desire to showcase the "real" Pukapukan language and using the modern vernacular as spoken today. Many people strongly identified with the desire for the Pukapukan Scriptures to include the full repertoire of the depth of the traditional language, including words that may not be so well-known nowadays and ways of structuring sentences that have almost been superseded by grammatical structures influenced by Rarotongan. At the other end of the spectrum would be the colloquial mixed language that is heard in everyday speech both on Pukapuka (mixed with Rarotongan) and in the diaspora (mixed with English).

The translation team has taken somewhat of a middle road in this respect too. Wherever possible we have tried to use a Pukapukan word instead of words speakers perceive to be Rarotongan. However, we recognise that there are many words of East Polynesian origin in everyday use and the boundaries between the lexicons of the two languages are not clearly defined. Some lesser-known Pukapukan words have been included in the text, but they are usually accompanied with a footnote or explanation in the glossary, or they can be readily understood from the context by nearby synonyms or explanatory phrases.

While most grammatical structures are Pukapukan, rather than those typical of Rarotongan, I (Mary) notice that there is considerable use of clauses with accusative case-marking (case-marking commonly found in Rarotongan), rather than ergatively or passively marked clauses, and there is sometimes overlap or merging between possession marked by *mō/mā* (not found in Rarotongan) and *nō/nā*. The older negative imperative marker *auyē* is used in preference to *auwē, auwae* or *aulaka* (< *auraka* in Rarotongan).

TE WALE O TE KAUPUA
PUKAPUKA DISABILITY CENTER
Akamataia: 16 July 2011 - Mayor ROTOIKA TENGERE
Tomoanga: 13 August 2021 - Mayor LEVI WALEWAOA
Project Funded by:
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Opened by: TETIO PAKITONGA PAULO ALIKI - MP HON. TINGIKA ELIKANA
Project Builders: RIPANAU TAIIA & PUAPII WUATAI

*(Above) Translation group with Kau Wowolo, Pukapuka, February 2022;*
*(Below) Final Community Checking Group, Pukapuka, December 2022 (photos - the authors)*

### *(d) Considering the diaspora and the homeland populations*

During the later stages of the project, a decision was made to print the New International Version (NIV), in smaller font, alongside the Pukapukan text in a diglot format. We recognised that many young people in the diaspora who are fluent in English as their first language wish to learn and maintain their heritage language. Likewise, the team thought that the addition of the English text would be mutually beneficial to young people resident on Pukapuka, facilitating their learning of English. The NIV was chosen because it was a very accurate translation, relatively easy to understand, with accessible use of copyright. Yet it is not as dynamic a translation as other modern translations such as Today's English Version, or the New Living Translation. Its style is closer to the King James Version, respecting the literal translation of idioms, metaphors, and cultural expressions, but in modern English. In this respect, it aligns well with the style of *Te Bibilia*. The decision to print the NIV alongside influenced the translation style to revert a little more towards form rather than the dynamic meaning of the earlier drafts, so that it would match the English text more closely. Some of the changes between the NIV versions (1984 and 2011) also needed to be addressed, and the influence of well-known verses in *Te Bibilia* sometimes took precedence over more fluid expression.

## 3. Orthographic and literacy issues

In consultation with Pukapukan communities, orthographic decisions have been through several iterations and endorsements, with the aim of balancing the principles of consistency and economy with acceptability to the speakers. Each set of decisions was influenced by the context at the time and by previous decisions that had been made. Yet even in the final stages of preparing *Te Puka Yā* for typesetting we realised, aided by computer software, that there are issues of consistency that remain outstanding. Compounds were joined or separated according to a principled decision based on word length, but sometimes the principle is overridden by inflectional or derivational morphology. Suffixes can attach to a base or to a postposed particle and counting prefixes normally attach to a numeral, but variations exist in long coordinated numeral phrases. Most problematically, the shape of the third person pronoun changes with case-marking or a preceding preposition, so that the teaching of spelling for a simple word like 'she, her' is not as easy as it might be in an ideal world. Some outstanding dilemmas exist, and there is always a tension between making consistent decisions and developing an easy-to-learn orthography. The decision to use the macron to indicate vowel length aligns well with the orthography of New Zealand Māori, which is familiar to the Pukapukan diaspora.

Pukapukans in the homeland and diaspora are literate in Cook Islands Māori from their use of *Te Bibilia Tapu* for daily readings and in church services. The vast majority are also literate in English. However, the language of Pukapuka is quite distinct from the national language. Helping people to become familiar with the conventions for writing the Pukapuka language has been achieved primarily by printing and distributing small booklets containing stories, cultural and historical pieces, and portions of Scripture on an ongoing basis over many years. Social media has also been used to provide daily readings in Pukapukan since 2011. During the height of the Covid-19 pandemic in Auckland, two young people took the initiative of producing a Psalm each day in recorded video format with language subtitles. [18] We recognise that the teaching of the Pukapukan language requires further resources and training.

### 4. Personnel and personal issues

A range of personal issues have perhaps presented the most challenges. One of the biggest philosophical issues that we found for individuals was their reluctance to be involved in translating, peer reviewing, or correcting the book of Revelation. Theirs was a mistaken fear of the injunction not to change anything by adding or taking words away from the revelation lest they face retribution (Rev 22:18-19).

Sickness and loss of translators have taken a toll on the team, both emotionally and in terms of stopping work and extending the timeframe. We honour those who have committed themselves to translation and who are no longer with us. Papa Atawua Robati was like our father, and he and his wife Nga had attended our wedding. Karitua Makuare, our main translator during the 1990s, who was part of the original group under Atawua, was like a brother to us. We had lived close to him in Kingsland and travelled with him to Pukapuka when his father requested that he visit as he was nearing the end of his life. After Karitua died from cancer in 2001, he was buried next to our son Jonathan. We felt his loss very keenly. Pastor Unu-ki-mua Williams, who coordinated the team from 2006, died only months after his 50th birthday. At least half a dozen men who have been part of the *Taka nō te Wulinga o te Puka Yā* have passed on, including Ngametua Rivaia and Mai's father Melota Ngamata, who had translated a large part of the Old Testament in draft form. Several men are now too old to contribute and are failing in their health or mental acumen. Each one of them is dearly loved, and we pray that the ones who are still alive will be able to hold the published book in their hands and be recognised for their unwavering commitment.

As we reflect on this seemingly interminable project, we recognise the influence of Marjorie and Ron on our colleague, Mairaro. As a student in Fiji, he visited their home often, and appreciated their friendly encouragement. They could see Mai's potential, and Ron tried to persuade him to change courses and study the culture of Pukapuka in the USA. We celebrate his accomplishments as a skilled translator, a graduate of Laidlaw College (Diploma in Biblical Studies), and as an educator in the Pukapuka Training Academy in Auckland where he taught Pukapukan culture and worldview.

## Cook Islands Mission History

I (Kevin) first started my reading in mission history in 1980 in the context of my Masters research. The LMS records were available on microfilm, and I spent many hours transcribing the accounts by the British missionaries of their brief visits to the atoll and becoming acquainted with the activities of the succession of pastors from the southern Cook Islands. On our first field trip to Pukapuka in 1981-1982, we produced a booklet giving the story of the first mission contact in 1857. A second edition with Pukapukan translation was made in Auckland, including a list of the pastors and a sketchy list of Pukapukan missionaries to Papua. While participating in the group of elderly folk at the Pukapuka Centre in 2003, I posed the question, "Can you tell me the names of all the men and women who served as missionaries in Papua?" I was impressed with how readily the group could provide the names and share what they knew; a complete list was easily assembled in a few weeks.

Like Marjorie, I was drawn to research certain Cook Islands *'orometua* who wrote significant accounts. In 2007, my Pukapukan colleague Ngametua Rivaia showed me a library copy of Raeburn Lange's volume, *Island Ministers,* in which Luka Manuae of Aitutaki was noted as having written an account about first contact with Pukapuka, with a reference to the Wyatt Gill collection of manuscripts held at the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington. [19] These manuscripts penned by Cook Islands authors in the second half of the 19th century had not long been copied onto microfilm. We were captivated as all three of us sat in the Massey University library and carefully transcribed Luka's manuscript, enthralled as before our eyes his account revealed the extraordinary events that transpired in the first four days of mission contact with the people of Pukapuka in December 1857. Not long afterwards, we sent a draft publication to Pukapuka to aid them in their celebration of 150 years of the Evangelia. On our return from the celebrations in January, we had great pleasure in relating to the Crocombes this important find. They insisted that we return to Rarotonga a month later to talk about "Luka's Story" at the inaugural conference of the Cook Islands Research Association. Subsequently, I enrolled in a course with Allan Davidson on the History of Pacific Christianity at Auckland University and worked on "Luka's Story" for an assignment. In 2011, Rangi Moeka'a ably assisted me in refining the English translation, which was published together with a commentary in the *Journal of Pacific History* (JPH) the following year. [20]

By that time, I had made a detailed inventory of the Gill collection of Cook Islands materials, and was amazed to unearth another gem. It had no indication of the author nor title to identify its contents, only the cryptic dates, "Junu 18 1872 – Junu 14 1877". This turned out to be a journal by another Aitutakian, Raukōpū Tāria, detailing the first four years of mission contact on the southern coast of Papua New Guinea. A decade passed, and with the prospect of the JPH special issue to commemorate the Cook Islands bicentenary, I found myself increasingly absorbed in the task of unpacking this remarkable account. Doing justice to "Rau's Report" required total concentration for over a year during the pandemic, as I pored over hundreds of digitized pages and transcribed all the source documents from the online London Missionary Society Papua records. (Thanks to Kari James, these digital files are now available on the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau website). [21]

As we continued to refine our over-large article for the JPH, we were gratified to hear that Marjorie was writing an Introduction to the volume. Though we were unable to communicate with her, we could imagine her pleasure at seeing the way that her recorded accounts of Motuan oral history were used in our intertextual reconstruction of the sequence of events of the first contact by the Cook Islands pioneers with the people of Port Moresby in 1873. [22] Another salient aspect of this study was the cooperative approach to research, as a number of people in Aitutaki, Rarotonga, New Zealand, and Australia assisted in providing genealogical information and made oral family records available to confirm the names of the wives of Rau Taria and his colleagues.

Rau Taria's vernacular account is the earliest record written by a Pacific missionary to Papua. His journal elucidates and clarifies the British missionary accounts, as his eye-witness narrative records events and journeys and names of chiefs and villages. Though Rau was in Papua for just three years, he made a great impact and can be regarded as the first person to record words in the Motuan language and describe their customs, beliefs, and artifacts. [23]

While it is unlikely that similar writings exist, we have found that a huge amount of information is waiting for a new generation of researchers to read and assess the significant contribution of the multitude of Cook Islanders who went across the Pacific. Indeed, over the course of a century (1839-1926), approximately 500 ‘evangelists, teachers and pastors’ and spouses worked in pioneering or cross-cultural situations. [24] This impressive record is recognised as being “unparalleled in any country of the world for the number of missionaries in relation to the size of the sending church”. [25]

The aim of our ongoing Cook Islands Mission History Project is to collaborate with descendants of the 'orometua and their wives and determine the women’s names and other biographical details, which will help to identify the unnamed “South Seas / Rarotongan teachers” mentioned in the LMS Records. This will enable accurate accounts of the lives of the mission pioneers from the Cook Islands to be told afresh in the future.

*(Above) Molingi Nato and Wualelei Kirirua chanting, 1982 (photo - David Fanshawe collection).*

# E yikunga mako talapaya nō Marjorie

*A praise chant in the* mako *style*

Kē wakatenitenia te wawine longonui,
*Let us praise the woman of great renown,*
te tamāwine lelei a ona mātutua,
*the fine daughter of her parents,*
e tama tau ki mua i ana wī yanga,
*an outstanding person in all her achievements,*
kāe tangata peia i tona taitangata.
*without equal among her peers.*
Nā kauwi koe i nā tutinga a nā tūpuna,
*You read the writings of the forefathers*
nā wulingia oki ki te leo papaa,
*and translated them into English,*
nā talatala a te kau nā tele
*the stories written by those who sailed*
ki nā wenua i te pōlikuliku o te ao
*to the lands in earth's farthest corners*
kē kave i te longo lelei a te Matua Yā
*to take the good news of Almighty God*
kia lātou nā nōnō i te pōuli newu o te mate,
*to those living in the dark shadow of death,*
e kiai na a lātou iloa te yauleka.
*where they did not know peace.*
Na ālu koe i nā lakainga a te kau māwuwutu,
*You followed in the steps of the wise,*
e tangata tauwaiva i te ako atunga i te āpī tuatolu,
*becoming a skilled teacher at an advanced level,*
nā watua au muna ki te lima māonioni,
*a creative writer, weaving your words deftly,*
kamuloa mātou mīmī ngutu wua i au yanga wotu,
*we are truly amazed at your great accomplishments,*
lo-le-lole, po-ti-poti, taungalulu.
*attractive, pleasing, well-formed.*
Atawai wolo e yē maneke,
*We thank you with profound gratitude,*
nō ai loa koe wakalelei, e tō mātou mōuli.
*take your long rest, our beloved one.*

## Footnotes

[1] Marjorie Crocombe, 1982, ‘Ruatoka: A Cook Islander in Papuan History’, *Polynesian Missions in Melanesia,* Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva, pp. 56 - 7. [Originally published in *Pacific Islands Monthly*]; https://archive.org/details/polynesianmissio0000unse/page/54/mode/2up

[2] Ron and Marjorie Crocombe, 1968, *The Works of Ta'unga: Records of a Polynesian Traveller in the South Seas 1833 - 1896,* ANU Press, Canberra.

[3] Maretu, 1983, *Cannibals and Converts: Radical Change in the Cook Islands***,** translated, annotated and edited by Marjorie Tua'inekore Crocombe. Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva.

[4] Oka Fauolo, 2005, *O Vavega o le Alofa Lavea'i: O le Tala Faasolopito o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano i Samoa*, Mālua Printing Press, Apia.

[5] See Guide to the records of the London Missionary Society (as filmed by AJCP), National Library of Australia, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-1126174847

[6] Veeti and Pau’s aspirations for a Bible translation into Pukapukan are mentioned by the New Zealand anthropologist, Ernest Beaglehole who they had been helping to compile a dictionary in 1935 (Ernest Beaglehole, 1944, *Islands of Danger,* Progressive Publishing Society, Wellington, pp.148 - 49).

[7] The Rev. Robert L. Challis first served as a L.M.S missionary on Rarotonga, 1943 - 1947, then relocated to Auckland.

[8] I (Mary) was really just an observer at that early stage. By the time we first visited Pukapuka in 1981 we had started to learn to speak the language and we conducted all of our research and daily interactions monolingually in Pukapukan.

[9] Ernest and Pearl Beaglehole, Myths, Stories and Chants from Pukapuka. Unpublished manuscript, Bishop Museum, Honolulu.

[10] Tukia Mataora, Mataora Tutai et al., 1981, *Pukapukan-English dictionary: a preliminary edition*. Photocopy typescript produced by Robert Borofsky, 57 pp.

[11] Rangi Moeka'a had been influential in bringing the double vowel orthography to the Cook Islands from his tertiary education under Bruce Biggs at the University of Auckland. The symbols for all consonants and vowels, including <y> for the interdental fricative, <v> for the voiced labiodental fricative and <w> for the voiced labiovelar, had long been established (Ernest and Pearl Beaglehole, 1937, *Ethnology of Pukapuka,* Bishop Museum Bulletin 150, Honolulu, pp.9 - 10).

[12] Mary Salisbury, 2002, *The grammar of Pukapukan*, PhD thesis. The University of Auckland, pp. 36 - 42.

[13] Ernest and Pearl Beaglehole,1991, *Pukapukan Dictionary Manuscript*, (edited by Kevin and Mary Salisbury) Pukapuka Dictionary Project, Department of Anthropology, University of Auckland, Auckland.

[14] https://cookislands.pacificbiodiversity.net.

[15] https://pukapuka.world/dictionary.

[16] In 2004, Nuku Rapana met with Nico Daams, SIL consultant who was visiting New Zealand from Australia. He suggested adopting the method used for the Kapingamarangi translation team with individuals being assigned to translate a draft and groups subsequently to peer-review the drafts, before the stages of community review and consultant checking.

[17] We acknowledge Paulus Kieviet, Senior Translation Consultant, SIL, for his translation

advice and typesetting of the final volume.

[18] For example, https://www.facebook.com/tapim9/videos/404075078181225/?idorvanity=196717593699391, https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=Talamo%20100, https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=Talamo%20150.

[19] William Wyatt Gill, Rarotonga MSS, Polynesian Society Records, Series 10, Ethnological manuscripts collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, MS-Papers-1887-058–063. File of contents of these volumes is available from kevinsalisburynz@gmail.com.

[20] Kevin Salisbury, 2012, ‘Manuscript XXV: The Arrival of the Word of God to Pukapuka’, *Journal of Pacific History,* Vol. 47, No. 4, pp. 491 - 513. https://doi.org/10.1080/00223344.2012.733067.

[21] https://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/pambu/Onlinematerials/JPH/LMS_Papua_Journals-Box1-1871-76.pdf; https://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/pambu/Onlinematerials/JPH/LMS_Papua_Letters-Box1-1872-76.pdf.

[22] Marjorie Crocombe, *Ruatoka,* 60 - 63; Kevin Salisbury & Mary Salisbury, Manuscript XXXVIII: Rau's Report on the Work of the Cook Islands ‘Orometua in Papua, 18 June 1872 -14 June 1877, *The Journal of Pacific History*, Vol. 57, No. 2 - 3 (2022), 38-41; Appendix II, Motuan Oral Traditions of First Contact, is accessible under Supplemental Data on the JPH website: http://doi.org/10.1080/00223344.2022.2078291. The typescript of Rau Taria’s original account beside the translation is viewable at Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, https://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/pambu/Onlinematerials/JPH/FINALRau’s_Report-TypescriptTranslation.pdf

[23] A Cook Islands edition of the journal article (including Rau’s original account in Aitutakian) has been circulated and copies given to libraries and churches: Raukopu Taria, 2023, *Te Kave’anga i te Tuatua nā te Atua ki Papua: Taking the Word of God to Papua.*

[24] K. Salisbury has compiled a comprehensive list drawn from the following sources and supplemented by original research: (1) B.F. Marsters, ‘Missionaries who served in Papua’, unpublished list, 1971; also to be found in Lockley Papers, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau microfiche; (2) ‘A Register of Cook Islands Christian Church pastors who served in the Cook Islands and overseas (1839 - 1976)’, Rarotonga: Government of the Cook Islands, Anthropological Division, 1976. (3) Akapapa'anga no te au orometua mei Takamoa atu nei mei te mataiti 1839 - 1997, Cook Islands Presbyterian Fellowship, Australia, 1997. Complete file available from kevinsalisburynz@gmail.com.

[25] Charles Forman, 1982, *The Island Churches of the South Pacific: Emergence in the Twentieth Century,* Maryknoll, New York, p.22.

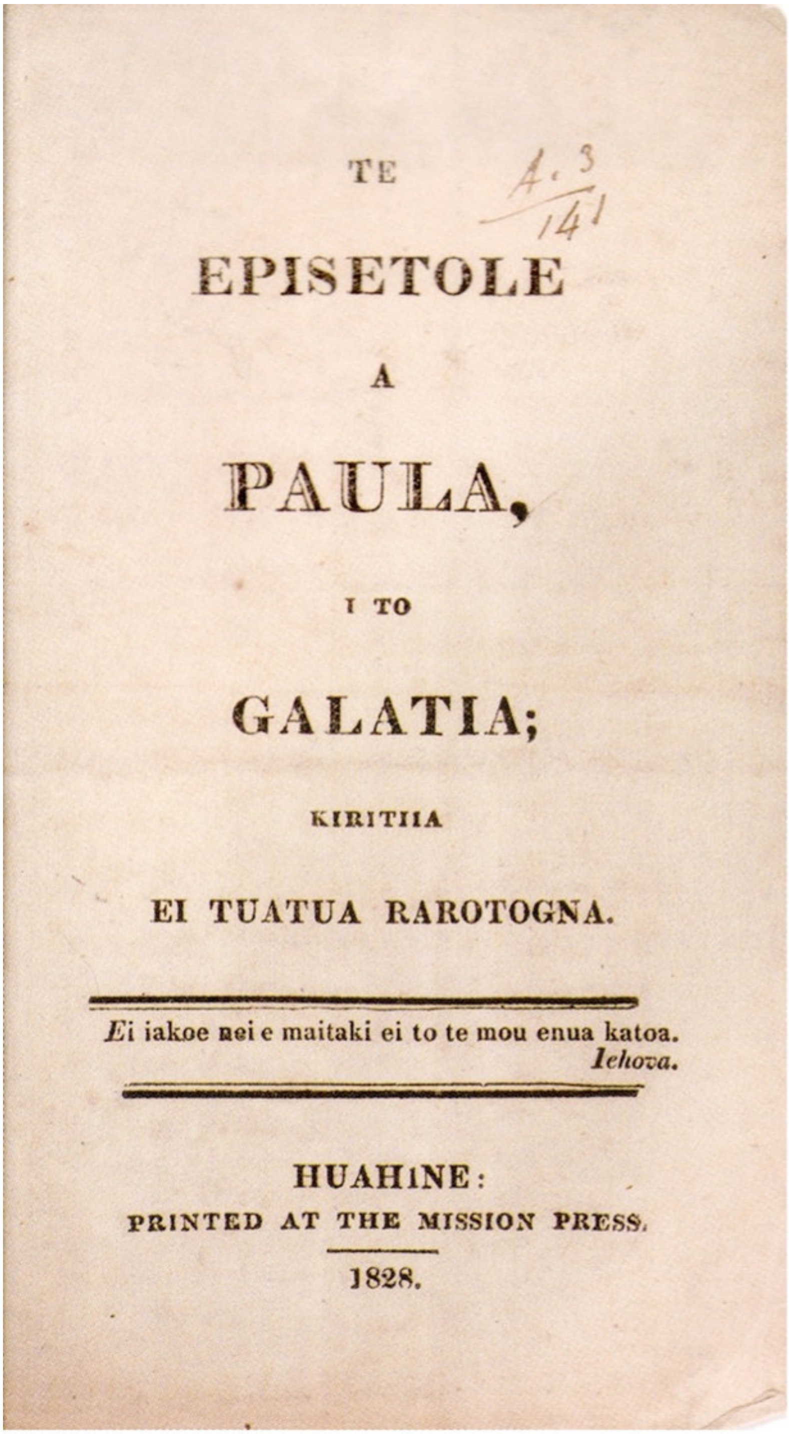
## Glossary

| | |
|---|---|
| aulaka | negative imperative marker, borrowed from CIM *'auraka* |
| auwae, auwē | negative imperative markers meaning 'don't' |
| auyē | older form of negative imperative marker, meaning 'don't'; not frequently used in conversation |
| īmene | song, hymn |
| īmene reo metua | acculturated hymn genre in polyphonic style from 19th century |
| īmene tuki | style of hymn singing with a rhythmic men's part |
| imu | ground oven |
| kau wowolo | Council of Chiefs and Elders |
| kave | pattern or design of a mat made with contrasting colour |
| Kavekave | deep sea fishing competition |
| ke kakao ki lunga o te toe | to appear above another, to reach higher or be more outstanding than other people |
| kena | white |
| ko kena te pākili, yaulā ko weweu te ngākau | [our] skins are white, yet our hearts are brown |
| leo wenua | language of the homeland, vernacular |
| mako | long intoned chant, often composed in praise of someone |
| mana | power, authority, aegis |
| mate | bereavement |
| mō/mā | irrealis possessive markers, prepositions meaning 'of, for' |
| nō/nā | realis possessive markers, possessive predicate markers, prepositions meaning 'of, for, belonging to' |
| ngākau | heart, seat of emotion |
| 'orometua (CIM) | pastor |
| pākili | skin |
| pānga | pandanus mat |
| papaa (Pukapuka) papa'ā (CIM) | foreigner, white person |
| pātautau | celebratory songs, often spontaneous, performed after sports events which contain in-house jokes and banter referring to characteristics of the opposing competitors or recent events, deriding the losing villages |
| tauwenu | strand of pandanus leaf inserted into weaving to join strands; can be of a contrastive colour for making a pattern |
| Te Bibilia Tapu | the Holy Bible in Rarotongan (1888) |
| te leo Wale | the Pukapuka language, literally the language of the Home island |

| | |
|---|---|
| te mana o te wui aliki | the aegis, power, authority of the chiefs |
| te Wui Aliki o Pukapuka ma Nassau | the Council of Chiefs of Pukapuka and Nassau Island |
| tele | visiting party from a different island or overseas |
| tia | daily scripture readings |
| tila | victorious wrestling chant |
| tuanga | *v.* to share out equally; *n.* social grouping for food division |
| tuanga kai | food division network |
| tupuna | ancestors, forebears |
| wakamalu | shelter, covering, protection, aegis |
| wakatayi | unity, togetherness, working together |
| weweu | dark, black |
| yulu | pandanus palm, *Pandanus pulposus*, sterile bush without a trunk that does not fruit; its leaves are darker and stronger for weaving than the common variety of pandanus (*wala, Pandanus tectorius)* |

## About the authors

**Mary and Kevin Salisbury** are members of Wycliffe Bible Translators New Zealand and are advisors for the Pukapukan Bible Translation Project. Mary is Pacific Area Linguistics Coordinator for SIL. Prior to her retirement, Mary taught Linguistics at the Auckland campus of Massey University for nearly 20 years. She tutored students studying the linguistics papers for the Diploma in Cook Islands Māori from 2017 - 2019. Mary and Kevin's research interests are the language and music of Pukapuka, oral traditions, the place of Pukapuka in Polynesia and Cook Islands mission history.



TE

A. 3
141

EPISETOLE

A

PAULA,

I TO

GALATIA;

KIRITIIA

EI TUATUA RAROTOGNA.

---

*Ei iakoe nei e maitaki ei to te mou enua katoa.*
*Iehova.*

---

HUAHINE:
PRINTED AT THE MISSION PRESS.

1828.

*One of the first printed texts in the Rarotongan language –*
*The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians, 1828.*

# Language policy in the Cook Islands

COOK ISLANDS MĀORI LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL COMMITTEE

*Key members of the Cook Islands Māori Language and Cultural Committee: (left to right) Joan Gragg, Tricia Thompson and Marjorie Crocombe*

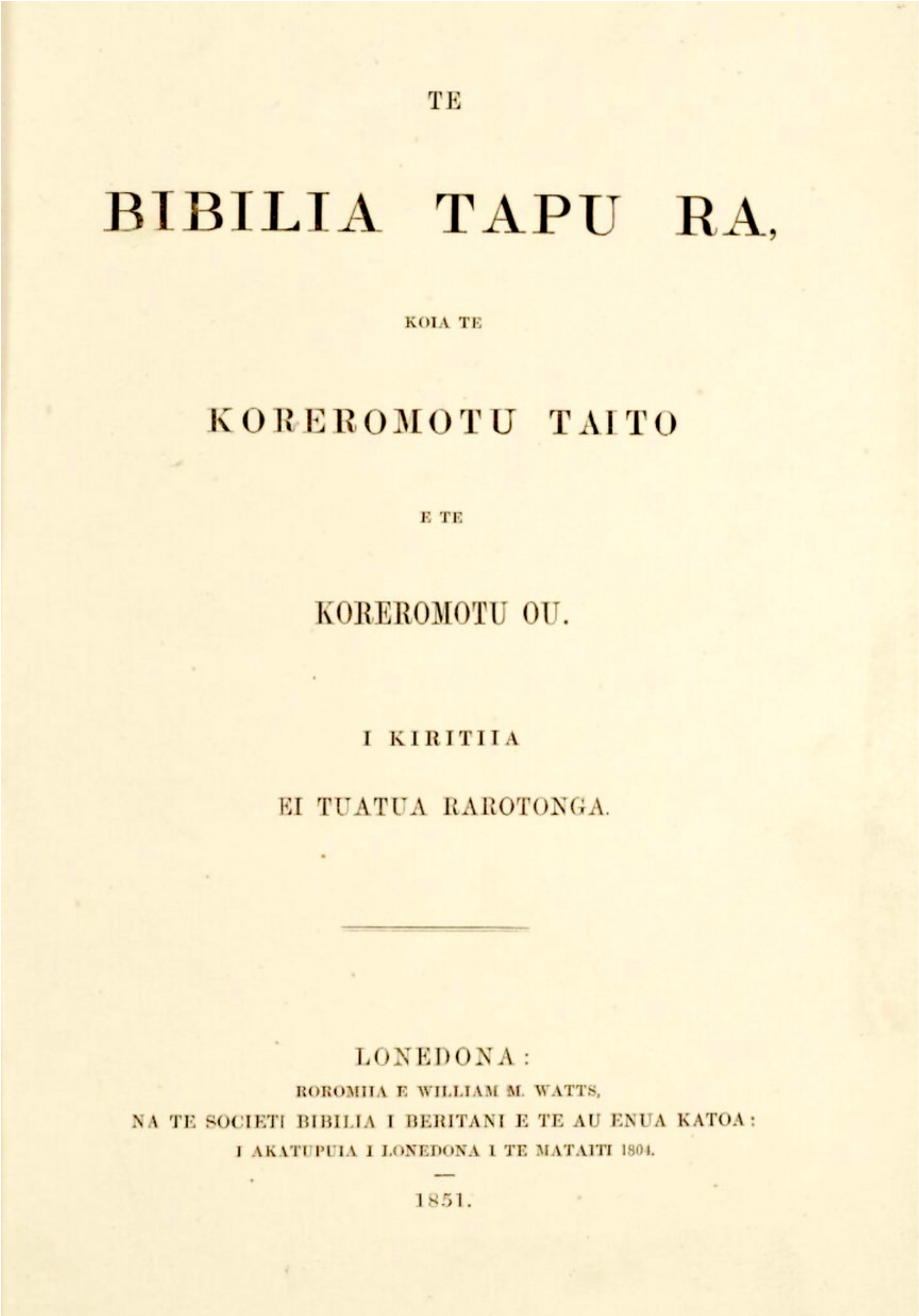
This paper considers the history of language policy and the formal teaching of Cook Islands Māori (CIM) language during the mission, colonial and post-colonial eras (1823 to present). Recurring themes are the absence of trained language teachers, the absence of CIM teaching resources, and a preference among parents for instruction in the English language. The paper references Marjorie Crocombe's role in language revitalisation, culminating in her contribution, in her 88th year, to the development of the first full degree program in Cook Islands Māori.

## The mission era, 1823 – 1888

The southern Cook Islands (then known as the Hervey Islands) were first missionized in the early 1820s by indigenous evangelists from the Society Islands located there by the Ra'iātea agent of the London Missionary Society, Rev. John Williams. In the first few years of the mission, Williams advised the evangelists that "The language of Raiatea alone you will speak [to the converts] lest they should not understand the book that we send." [1]

It quickly became clear, however, to Williams' missionary colleague, Rev. Robert Bourne, that

> they [the converts] cannot understand the Tahitian dialect – their language (especially that of Rarotonga and Mangeea [Mangaia] [2]) approaches very near to the New Zealanders [Māori] and it will be necessary to consider whether or not a new translation of the scriptures will not be necessary



TE

BIBILIA TAPU RA,

KOIA TE

KOREROMOTU TAITO

E TE

KOREROMOTU OU.

I KIRITIIA

EI TUATUA RAROTONGA.

LONEDONA:
ROROMIIA E WILLIAM M. WATTS,
NA TE SOCIETI BIBILIA I BERITANI E TE AU ENUA KATOA:
I AKATUPUIA I LONEDONA I TE MATAITI 1804.

1851.

*The first complete edition of the Holy Bible in the Rarotongan language, 1851*

> for them – they spell according to what is printed in the Tahitian Spelling Book but pronounced according to their own – for instance they will spell the word taria (ear) as it is printed but they will pronounce it taringa but they will never learn to read properly if that is persisted in – at Aitutaki they have neither the ‘f’ or ‘h’ in their language nor can they pronounce it. I think the number of souls in the Harvey [Hervey] Islands is sufficiently large to require a version of the Scriptures for their use. [3]

Three years later, the Rev. Aaron Buzacott, newly located on Rarotonga with his fellow missionary Rev. Charles Pitman, observed, “They do not make that progress in learning which we could wish but this perhaps is easily accounted for. They have no books printed in their own language. We are obliged to instruct them with those which are printed in the Tahitian language. This to them a great part of it is utterly unintelligible & the words which do in any way resemble are both spelled & pronounced very differently….” [4]

In response, the Rev. John Williams “determined immediately [in late 1827] [5] on preparing some books in their own language; and with this view I drew up an elementary work, and translated the gospel of John and the epistle to the Galatians which were printed a few months after; and, from the moment the people received books in their own dialect, their progress has been so rapid, that, at the present time, there is a greater number of persons who can read at Rarotonga than at any other of our stations; and I may here add, that I think it a circumstance of very rare occurrence that a religious impression is produced upon the minds of a people, except by addressing them in their mother tongue” (Williams, 1838; 101).

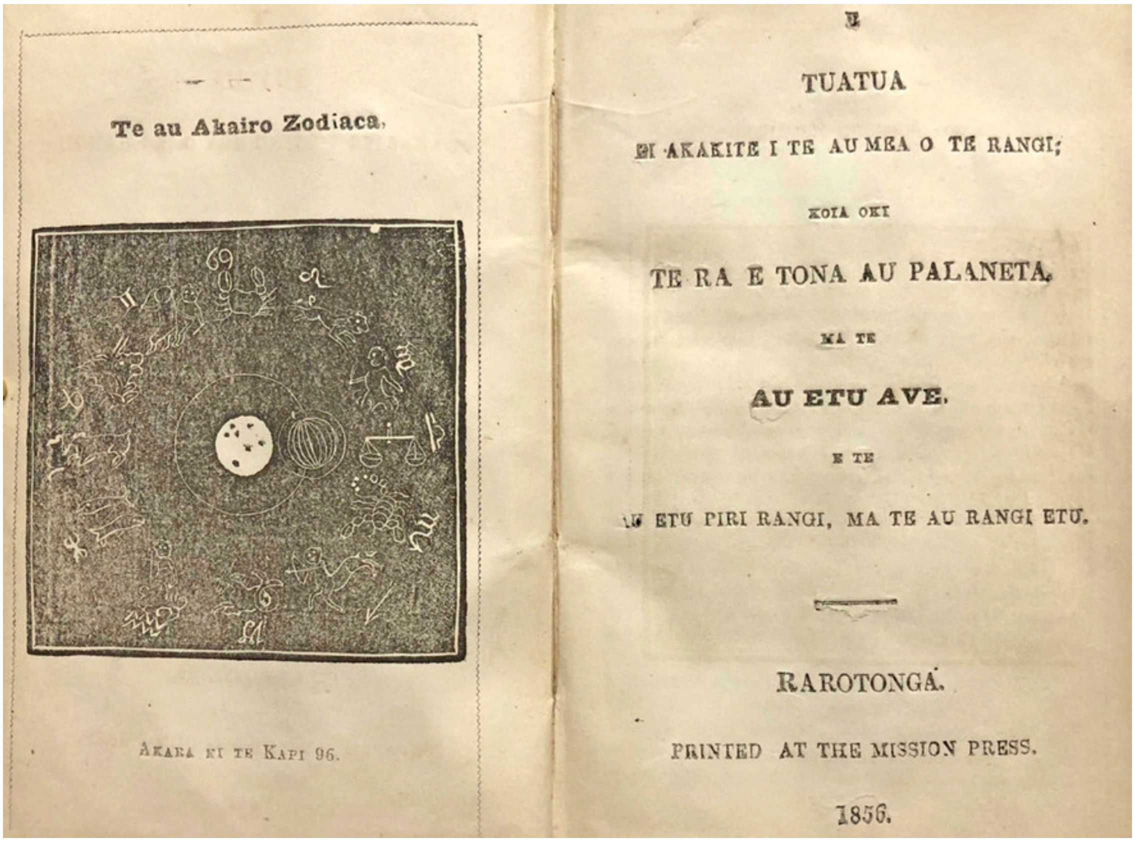
Once a dictionary and grammar of Rarotongan had been completed, reading and writing were taught to children and adults, in the vernacular, initially for two hours a day, through the mission schools. Those who submitted themselves to Christian instruction became known initially by the Tahitian term ‘ha'api'i parau’ then as ‘kai parau’ (‘consumers of the word’ or ‘Bible readers’). [6]

New-found literacy created a growing demand for books in the local language. This was met initially by translations by Williams, Buzacott and Pitman of the books of the New Testament and a number of religious tracts printed either at the Huahine Mission Press or in London.

In 1832, Buzacott travelled from Rarotonga to Tahiti to learn the art of composition and printing. The first book he printed was a Cook Islands translation of the First Epistle of Peter. Back on Rarotonga, in 1834, he received a second-hand printing press from the Tahitian mission [7] on which he printed, with local assistants, the first books ever produced on Rarotonga – *Browne’s Catechism* and *The Moral Law* – in Cook Islands Māori.

As well as printing thousands of copies of books and pamphlets, the Takamoa press [8] began publishing a monthly periodical, Rarotonga’s first newspaper – *Te Puna Vai* – “with a view to the improvement of the inhabitants of this group generally and especially the young.”

Between January and December 1844, in addition to printing one million pages of the books of *Samuel* and *Judges*, a quarter of a million pages of the book of *Kings*, nearly a million pages of Roland Hill’s *Catechisms*, and primers in Astronomy, Geography and Arithmetic, all in Cook Islands Māori, the Takamoa press printed 36,000 pages of the newspaper *Te Puna Vai*. [9]



Te au Akairo Zodiaca.

Akara ki te Kapi 96.

E

TUATUA

EI AKAKITE I TE AU MEA O TE RANGI;

KOIA OKI

TE RA E TONA AU PALANETA,

MA TE

AU ETU AVE.

E TE

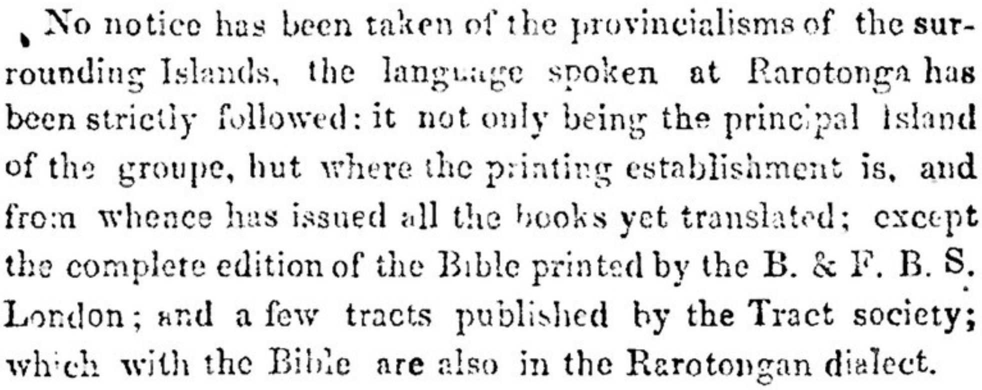
U ETU PIRI RANGI, MA TE AU RANGI ETU.

RAROTONGA.

PRINTED AT THE MISSION PRESS.

1856.

*An early textbook on Astronomy written in Cook Islands Māori and taught in mission schools. Printed at the Mission Press, Rarotonga, 1856.*



No notice has been taken of the provincialisms of the surrounding Islands, the language spoken at Rarotonga has been strictly followed: it not only being the principal Island of the groupe, but where the printing establishment is, and from whence has issued all the books yet translated; except the complete edition of the Bible printed by the B. & F. B. S. London; and a few tracts published by the Tract society; which with the Bible are also in the Rarotongan dialect.

*The mission promoted the language of Rarotonga over "the provincialisms" of the other islands - extract from Te Akataka Reo Rarotonga [Rarotongan Grammar] by Rev. Aaron Buzacott, Mission Press, Rarotonga, 1854.*

Buzacott estimates that, in total, 3,600 copies of the paper were printed - the first in March 1843, and the last in December 1844.

The March and June, 1843 issues of *Te Puna Vai* contained parts I and II of a thirteen page report written by Ta'unga (who remains one of the Rarotongan language's most prolific authors), entitled 'Te Aerenga o Barakoti ma i te kave aere i nga Orometua Rarotonga e te tutaka aere i te au enua etene, te rai i tataia e Ta'unga' [The Trip of Buzacott and Others to Take Rarotongan Teachers and to Inspect the Heathen Islands, Mostly Written by Ta'unga].

The greatly increased output of the Takamoa printing office, after 1843, was made possible by finally "having a good [printing] press" [10], a large amount of paper supplied by the British Foreign and Bible Society and two new sets of fonts donated by Messrs Kemp and Fairfax of Sydney, NSW, publishers of the *Sydney Herald*. [11]

With Rarotongan as the language of the Mission Press, Williams instructed Cook Islands missionaries "to teach the people the Rarotongan language because the Bible for this island of Mangaia and those of the islands of Atiu, Mauke, Mitiaro and Aitutaki will all be in the Rarotongan language." [12] Yet despite the predominance of Rarotongan, Gill noted that local island languages still flourished [13] and throughout the mission period, Cook Islanders produced important local vernacular texts including family books that recorded genealogies and ties to land, local histories including the historical records of Mangaia written in tara Mangaia by Mamae [14]; the "History and Traditions of Rarotonga" by Te Ariki Tara 'Are of Rarotonga (Tara 'Are, 2000); Maretu's autobiography (transl. Crocombe, 1983); Ta'unga's reflection on mission service in New Caledonia and Sāmoa (Crocombe and Crocombe, 1968); Papeiha's accounts of the introduction of Christianity to Aitutaki and Rarotonga (Tumu-Makara and Maidment, 2022), Luka Manuae's account of the introduction of Christianity to Pukapuka (Salisbury, 2012), Rau's Report on the Work of the Cook Islands 'Orometua in Papua (Salisbury and Salisbury, 2022), etc. [15]

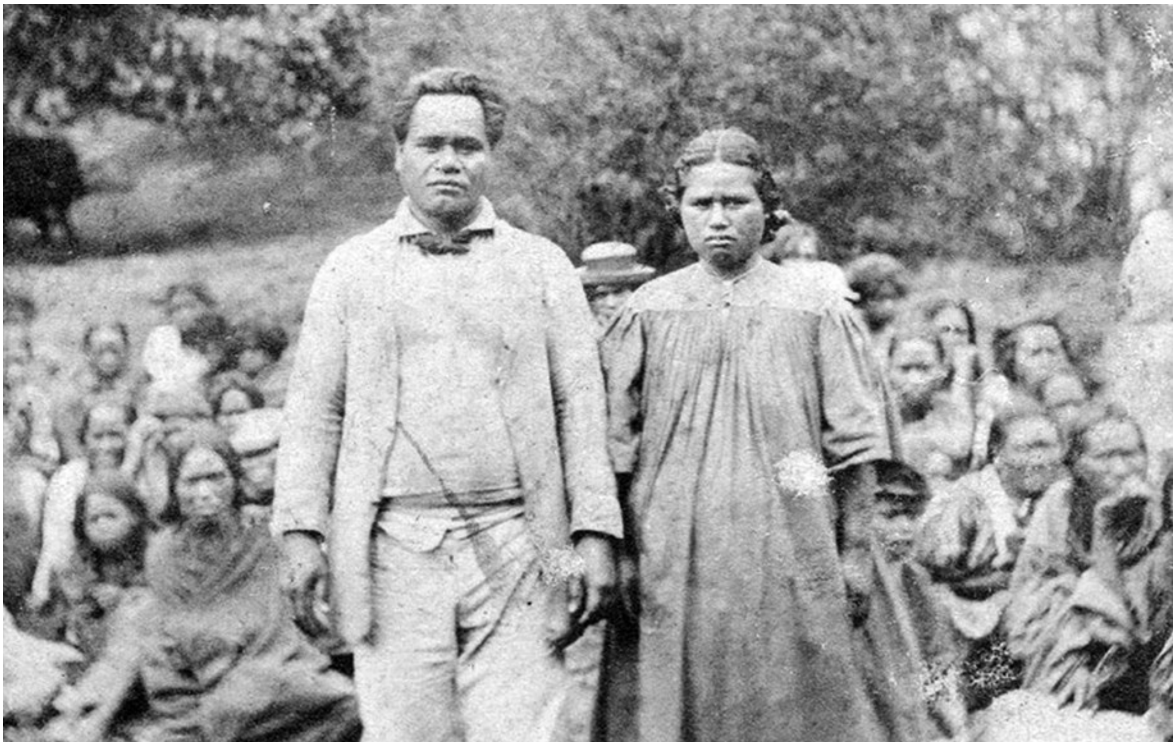
The mission era was, in summary, a golden era of writing, publication and instruction in the Cook Islands Māori language.

## The British Protectorate, 1888 - 1901

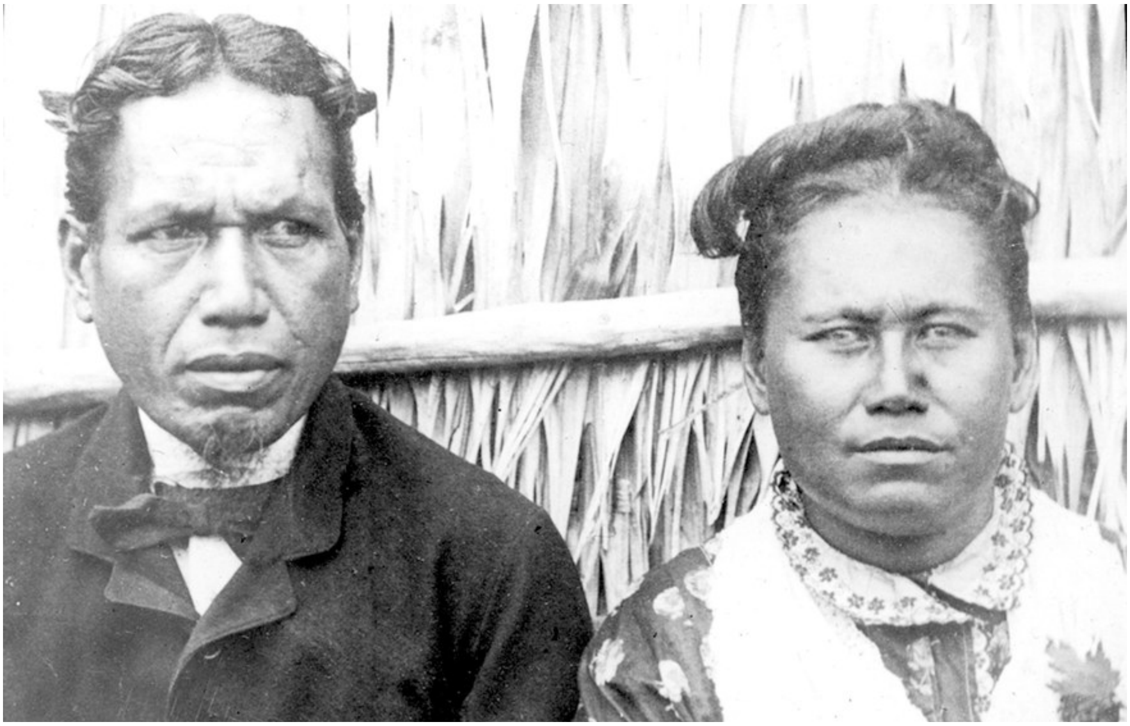
In 1888 the British Government responded to petitions from the chiefs of Rarotonga to declare a Protectorate over the Cook Islands. Frederick J. Moss, on his appointment as British Resident, found that nearly all islanders over the age of ten could read and write in the Cook Islands language thanks to the efforts of the LMS mission schools. [16] His own view was, however, that the available literature in the local language was too limited to prepare the people for formal self-government and that instruction in the English language would better prepare Cook Islanders for their inevitable engagement with the wider world.

The 'ui ariki (chiefs) of Rarotonga concurred –

> We agree with Mr. Moss that unless we have schools and teach English in them the Government will never be able to work without outside help, and therefore can never be safe or strong. [17]



*(Above) Sadaraka (Mamae) - the great exponent of Mangaian language and history, with his wife Aravao, c.1850s (photo - Michael Graham-Stewart); (below) Ruatoka and Tungane, Mangaian missionaries to Papua, whose life stories were recorded by Marjorie Crocombe in 1972 (photo; Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology, University of Cambridge, LS.135874.TC1).*



On 15 November 1895, a Schools Act was passed by the Cook Islands Federal Government, requiring commitment to English as the medium of instruction as a condition of eligibility for Government certification. [18] Hesitancy by the LMS mission to convert mission schools from vernacular to English language schools, led Moss to encourage other denominations (specifically Adventists and the Catholic Sisters of St. Joseph [19]) to operate public schools or establish their own.

As new religious bodies took up the challenge, the LMS relented, commencing instruction in English at the Avarua school. As the Rarotongan LMS missionary Rev. J. J. K. Hutchin observed, "To give up on the teaching of English now would be to strengthen the hold the Catholics have on the island." [20] His colleague, the LMS missionary Rev. H. Bond James concurred. "The natives of these islands," he wrote,

> are more and more fidgety about the education of their children. They want and will have their children taught the English language. That is the point at which the Roman Catholics can attack us and, in some places, overcome our influences, as they have already done in Mauke. [21] I am more convinced than ever that the Government of New Zealand should be pressed to take over the secular education of the children. That I think would relieve us to a very large extent of our anxieties concerning the Roman Catholics. The policy of keeping in our hands work, which on account of financial and geographical difficulties we cannot do, is suicidal. [22]

With too few local teachers equipped to teach in the English language and imported English teachers unable to speak the vernacular, the policy of requiring English as the medium of instruction in public schools lapsed in 1898. The policy had been, as Miss A. E. Large, Principal at Tereora observed, a good idea "but it was not wisely carried out." [23]

> The Government Schools have proved a dismal failure. We believe the chief reason is to be found in the very crude and unworkable education bill, which makes it compulsory to convey all instruction through the medium of the English language; and also to the fact that the teachers themselves have no knowledge of Māori. As soon as the government decided to discontinue the schools the L.M.S. resumed possession of the buildings, and promptly recommenced the vernacular schools. We hear that the attendance has so far proved eminently satisfactory. [24]

Exceptions were (i) Aitutaki where the English speaking Araura boarding school was opened in 1902 under "the two Miss Royles", daughters of the early missionary Rev. Henry Royle; (ii) Mangaia where, during the tenure of Rev. H. Bond James (1902 - 1910), "Maori is taught for the first hour in the morning; then we teach in English." [25] James believed this would assist Mangaians to participate more effectively in trade and "take an active and intelligent part in the life of the Empire") [26] and (iii) Ma'uke where the Catholic "priest, though a Frenchman, professes to teach their children English" in response to "a great desire on the part of the natives to learn English." [27]

Meanwhile, Tereora Boarding School had been opened in 1894 as a secondary school designed, in part, to fill the potential demand for English teachers across the Cook Islands. The age for entry was 10 years, with students retained until at least 15 years of age. The medium of instruction was English. No child who had attended the school for a probationary six months was permitted to speak in the vernacular. The curriculum included Scripture, Scripture History, Reading, Recitation, Writing, Arithmetic, Geography, Grammar and Composition, Singing and Sewing (girls only) with two hours a day of manual work. [28] A number of graduates assisted in the mission schools but the intention of providing trained English-speaking teachers was frustrated by the fact that the New Zealand Government took no financial responsibility for Cook Islands education [29] and the Mission could not afford to pay qualified teachers. As the Principal of Tereora, Percy Hall noted, graduates could not be "reasonably expected to teach English in the village, just for the love of it, especially when schools are already being taught [in the vernacular] by the native pastors." [30]

A census of the Cook Islands population (excluding Palmerston and Pukapuka) undertaken in April 1911 found that of those who responded (5,091 out of a total resident population of 7,878), 90% could read and write Māori; 8% could only read Māori and just 2.2% could read and write both languages. Of the 2.2% who were able to read and write in both languages, the majority (79%) were clustered on Rarotonga.

## The New Zealand colonial era, 1901 – 1965

In 1911, due to a lack of funding, the LMS closed the Cook Islands' only secondary school at Tereora. There would be no further on-island secondary schooling until 1954.

In 1914, the New Zealand colonial administration under the Minister for Islands Sir Maui Pomare began assuming responsibility for primary education in the Cook Islands.

> Instruction would be in English in the three Rs, crafts and elementary agriculture, the vernacular being used solely to introduce the new language. English was considered desirable because the islanders wanted it, there were few vernacular publications, and new ideas could best be communicated in English (Gilson, 1980; 172).

In 1915 English became the official language of the Cook Islands. [31]

Pomare's policy was reinforced when Sir Apirana Ngata, the Minister of Native Affairs and Cook Islands (1928 - 34) directed that the vernacular should not be used in any form in Cook Islands schools.

In consequence of these official policies, 1945 census figures indicated an expanding bilingualism in the Cook Islands. Among 3,622 Cook Islanders aged 10 years or over, 1,625 could read and write English, 195 could read but not write English, while 3,544 could read and write the vernacular (Gilson, 1980; 177). At the same time, a committee of visiting educationalists (Beeby, Reynard and Fletcher) sent to Rarotonga by the New Zealand Prime Minister Peter Fraser in 1945, adjudged Rarotongans proficient in neither language, and recommended that Cook Islands Māori replace English as the sole language of instruction for the first two or three years of primary education with English gradually introduced thereafter. They further recommended that Rarotongan be the standard language for all textbooks (Gilson, 1980; 214).

However, according to Gilson -

> The reintroduction of the vernacular was slowed down by the lack of textbooks and the widespread resistance of the islanders, who still regarded the teaching of English as the most important function of the schools (Gilson, 1980; 214).

According to Edwards -

> As a compromise with the community, some use of the vernacular was introduced to all classes and some English was taught to infant classes: oral English was taught in the first year and reading added in the second year with writing added in the third year (Edwards, 2016; 68).

In the 1950s, as Maureen Goodwin records, "Hugh Hickling, Director of Education in the Cook Islands, also tried to introduce an idea that … a child would learn a foreign language better if he/she knew his/her own language first. However, this was viewed [locally] as a move to stop Cook Islanders getting better jobs by limiting opportunities to learn English" (Goodwin, 2002; 96).

The final years of the colonial era saw the introduction of the Cook Islands Māori *School Journals*, the teaching of Māori grammar, and greater efforts to stimulate widespread Māori reading.

## The post-colonial era

The level of literature production in the Māori language during the 19th century was not replicated in the twentieth century, though The Holy Bible – *Te Bibilia Tapu* – described by one authority as "the most comprehensive published body of literature in Cook Islands [Rarotongan] Māori" [32] – remained a mainstay.

The absence of vernacular publications [33], and the presumed superiority of English in the communication of new ideas, remained a common theme among advocates of school instruction in the English language. In the 1950s and 60s Taira Rere assisted by Tangata Simiona and others set about reversing this with a series of school texts, grammars, and histories in the Rarotongan language. From 1954 they were assisted by Marjorie Crocombe who worked on developing vernacular infant and primary school readers.

This process accelerated following self-government in 1965 when, as Goodwin notes, the Cook Islands became free to develop its own education system. "A Curriculum Advisory Unit was set up to develop the different syllabi and curricula. …Readers were produced in Māori, and in the dialects. Māori was no longer used to introduce English. Māori was the first language of instruction for children. English was learnt via the Tate Oral Language Programme… The delivery of both Māori and English was to be via Transitional Bilingualism.[34] Children were to be introduced to oral English at pre-school, and the amount of oral English was to increase each year until literacy began towards the end of Grade 3" (Goodwin, 2002; 96-7).

In 1975 an education policy statement was issued indicating that Cook Islands would have a bilingual education system and Māori would become a compulsory subject at secondary school. Students were to be taught in Cook Islands Māori for the first three years of their schooling, after which English was to be introduced. [35]

However, it was observed over the next decade that the political will to provide acceptable levels of funding for the resulting initiatives did not materialise. Very few teachers had any training in language teaching, making the bilingualism goal difficult, especially when coupled with a lack of virtually any texts or resources (Edwards, 2016; 69).

Thirty years after self-government, Aileen Wigglesworth in her 1996 study of "Cook Islands Māori English" concluded -

> Currently, all Cook Islands state primary schools except one on Rarotonga (Avatea School) are conducted in CIM (officially, the Rarotongan variety). The curriculum is designed to give the children a solid basis in their indigenous language before they learn English. In the first two years, teachers work primarily in spoken and written CIM, and they introduce spoken English. English writing is taught from grade three (Wigglesworth, 1996; 59).

Yet, given the emphasis on academic success within the NZ qualifications system, Wigglesworth concluded, "the primary focus of state educational policy in the self-governing Cook Islands is teaching English" (Wigglesworth, 1996; 58).

In April 2019, the Ministry endorsed a new Language Policy – *Te Peu e te Akono'anga Māori* – "designed to ensure that the language, customs, environment and values of the Cook Islands are recognised at all levels of education." This policy provides three language models that schools could adopt according to their circumstances.

1. **Immersion** in which Reo Māori is used as the main language of instruction. Under this model, 80% -100 % of teaching and learning across Essential Learning Areas (ELA's) is conducted using Reo Māori, with the introduction of English as a subject at Year 3, Year 6 or Year 8.

2. **Maintenance Heritage Immersion** in which English is used as the main language of instruction with Reo Māori language phased in over time.

3. **Two Way Immersion** which provide exposure to both Reo Māori language and English language as learners progress.

While many of the schools have adopted immersion, they are reported as finding it hard to implement due to the lack of trained local teachers. [36] This is in part attributed to a previous Ministry of Education view, "that 'Every teacher is a teacher of language', implying that no specific training is required. I was told that there are no teachers of CIM but… it is a policy principle that every school must include CIM as a subject up to Year 13" (Sallabank, 2013; 8).

The absence of specialized language training in Cook Islands schools was reflected in teacher attitudes reported by Edwards (2003; 126) “that when students are learning two languages at the same time they will not do as well in either of them as the use of two languages confuses learners and slows down learning.”

## University of the South Pacific (USP) Māori program

It was against this background that the USP Cook Islands Māori language program was introduced. The catalyst was the opening of the Confucius Classroom at USP Cook Islands in October 2015, an initiative which the late Professor Ron Crocombe had long advocated to advantage the Cook Islands in its engagement with China’s growing importance in the region.

However, a well-resourced programme with professionally trained teachers providing Chinese language training contrasted starkly with the absence of any comparable university programme for Cook Islands Māori, a point Marjorie Crocombe was quick to point out to both the visiting USP Vice Chancellor and the Cook Islands Prime Minister (who, at the time, was the University’s Chancellor).

Willans (2019), Crocombe et al (2019 a, b) and Gragg (*see box inset*) have documented how the intervention of Marjorie Crocombe and her colleagues on the Cook Islands Māori Language and Cultural Committee led, in 2017, to the introduction of a diploma, a BA major and a teaching subject in Cook Islands Māori at USP.

With Cook Islands Māori already a recognised New Zealand NCEA qualification and, in 2023, three classes of students undertaking Level 3 CIM classes at Tereora College, the potential exists for a significant number of Level 3 CIM students to transition to tertiary CIM studies, given suitable incentives, such as higher starting salaries for qualified CIM language teachers.

## Ongoing issues

Recurring themes in the history of formal language teaching in the Cook Islands include the absence of trained language teachers, the absence of CIM texts and teaching resources and a preference among many parents for instruction in the English language.

The Cook Islands Ministry of Education has recently acknowledged that it has yet to meet its objectives in the teaching and learning of CIM and reiterated the need for more trained Māori language teachers, the development of more extensive Māori language texts and resources and the use of more innovative pedagogies.

In its 2023/24 Business Plan [37], the Ministry placed priority on the funding and delivery of -

> Consolidated and focused teaching and learning programmes designed to improve Māori literacy whether learners are first language or second language learners. We know where significant improvements need to be made and [are] dedicating support programmes to ensure teachers are resourced to deliver quality programmes. Ongoing budgetary support for the publication of Cook Islands Māori readers, across dialects, and resource development – written and compiled by Cook Islands teachers.

> [And] Ongoing budgetary support that accords priority to building a library of Cook Islands publications for schools, by Cook Islands authors and teachers. This support extends sustained financial assistance to those within our education sector wishing to advance their teaching qualifications in Vernacular Languages and education programmes.

For the period 2023 to 2027, the Ministry has committed to the production of "10 titles set in Māori for the reading levels Akari A & E (narrative and poetry)" across all Cook Islands dialects and languages such as Pukapukan.

In respect of teacher training, one teacher trainee has completed the USP Bachelor of Education in-country, majoring in Geography and Cook Islands Māori and is now teaching Māori language at Tereora College. An additional six teachers graduated with the Diploma in Cook Islands Māori in 2021. From 2024, the Ministry of Education is committed to "fund support for up to 15 MoE employees to participate in the Diploma in Vernacular Languages (CIM), and other CIM linguistic papers offered by USP Cook Islands Campus."

Dr Sally Akevai Nicholas, who with Dr Mary Salisbury, taught the initial Diploma in CIM cohort, reports that –

> Of all the profoundly valuable outcomes of this programme so far, the most important one involves a shift in attitude towards our language. I was repeatedly told by students after the first course that they used to believe the story that our language was inferior to English, and that because of what they have now learnt, they no longer believe this colonial lie. And better still, because they are teachers, they will take this message back to their schools and classrooms and help to reclaim the narrative about the value of our Reo, which will in turn help our revitalisation efforts. [38]

At Auckland University, Dr Nicholas and colleagues are developing digital tools capable of automatically transcribing spoken, and reading written, Cook Island Māori, crucial for the development of AI-powered support for teaching and learning the language. AI language models are trained on large amounts of text data from the internet, making it increasingly important to digitise and place online as many CIM texts as possible. Additionally, new digital texts need to be created exploring all aspects of CIM knowledge.

The preference of many parents for instruction of their children in English and the persistent belief that instruction in Māori detracts from competence in English remains an under-researched challenge (Edwards, 2003; 126). As Ina Herrmann observes "the deeply entrenched mindsets of teachers, coupled with parents mindsets about Māori will continue to challenge the teaching of Māori, unless they themselves are challenged. The solutions are within ourselves." [39]

# USP Cook Islands Māori Language Program

*Joan Gragg*

I am writing to honour the very special Dr. Marjorie Tua‘inekore Crocombe, a visionary leader. Others have written of how she made a difference to the lives of so many. I am writing about my involvement with Marjie as friend and colleague on the Māori Language and Cultural Committee.

I sat with her at the opening of the Confucius Classroom at our Cook Islands Campus of the University of the South Pacific. At the end of the event, we discussed how we could do something about teaching Cook Islands Māori at our University, which had yet to offer the language as a degree program.

On the following Saturday, I met Tricia Thompson, an education consultant, at the Punanga Market and told her about the event. Together, we spoke with Marjie and discussed how we could include Cook Islands Māori in tertiary education programs at our USP Campus. We invited Ngavaevae Papatua, the Ministry of Education’s Secondary Māori Advisor, to join our committee. We considered that it was important to build on the learning and usage of Cook Islands Māori already happening in secondary education. Our committee was aware that USP already offered other language and culture studies in degree programs.

Marjie saw an opportunity for teachers not only to study Cook Islands Māori at USP but also to earn a degree in our language and provide them with an opportunity to upskill their qualifications. Marjie had the will and the passion to find the way to make this happen.

We met with the USP Campus Director Rod Dixon and the Secretary of Education Gail Townsend for advice on how to drive this initiative forward.

When the then USP Chancellor, the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands Henry Puna was visiting the Cook Islands Campus in Rarotonga to launch an important book (*Cook Islands Art and Architecture*), Marjie being Marjie seized the opportunity to promote the idea of a degree in Cook Islands Māori language to the assembled guests. She organized several meetings with the Prime Minister to discuss our vision. (How could he refuse?)

The Prime Minister recalls –

> “I was the Chancellor of USP at the time and Marjorie had invited me to speak at the Cook Islands campus on the importance of our native language to our culture and identity… While taking questions after, she challenged me publicly to do what I can to help with the survival of our language by having it accepted as part of the USP curriculum so that it is available to our people and others who choose to learn it. The inclusion was made that same year.” (*Islands Business*, 3 August 2022)

With the support of USP staff at the USP Department of Linguistics and Languages on the main campus in Fiji, the Māori language courses were developed by Dr. Fiona Willans, Ngavaevae

*(Left) Then Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, Henry Puna and Mrs Akaiti Puna; (right) Marjorie Crocombe at the launch of the book Cook Islands Art and Architecture, 2015.*

Papatua, and Rod Dixon.

The Education Department played a pivotal role in getting funding and enrolments. In mid-2017, our proposal to introduce a diploma, a BA major, and a teaching subject for trainee secondary teachers in Cook Islands Māori was approved by the University Council. The Degree was introduced in 2018. In 2021, the first students graduated with their diplomas. The small committee led by Majorie Crocombe, and including Tricia Thompson, Ngavaevae Papatua, Rod Dixon, and Joan Gragg were able to inspire others to make a dream come true. (The 'Cook Islands model' was used subsequently to introduce new language programmes in Tongan and Niuafoˈou, Vagahau Niue, Vanuatu Language Studies and Rotuman).

Marjie was a truly visionary leader.

*The first students graduate in the Diploma in Pacific Vernacular Language (Cook Islands Māori), Rarotonga, 2021.*

AKAMATA -
PURE AKAMATA -

*Courtney Napa (centre) and Angela Wallbank (at podium) sharing ideas for a Cook Islands Māori language learning app. at the Institute on Collaborative Language Research (CoLang) workshop, Arizona State University (ASU) and Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community (SRPMIC), June 2024 (photo: Mii Nimerota).*

# Footnotes

[1] “Some advice how to act when you arrive at the land to which God shall lead you” given in writing to the six evangelists aboard the *Endeavour* on Williams’ first visit to the Cook Islands, July to August 1823 (Rev. John Williams; 6 July 1823, SOAS, SSL, Box 4, Folder 1, Jacket A).

[2] *Observation by Rev Robert Bourne from a visit to the Hervey Group* in Rev. Robert Bourne, 26 January 1825, SOAS, SSL, Box 5, Folder 1, Jacket A. Rev. William Wyatt Gill also noted “a sermon in [the Tahitian language] would be perfectly unintelligible to a Rarotongan or Mangaian congregation” - W.W. Gill, 26 August 1859, SOAS, SSL Box 27, Folder 4, Jacket C.

[3] Bourne estimates the islands’ populations in 1825 as follows – Huahine 1,800; Mai'ao-iti 200; Ra'iātea 1,500; Taha'a 700; Bora Bora 1,000; Maupiti 300; Total 5,500. Aitutaki 2.000; Atiu 1,500; Mitiaro 80; Maute [Ma'uke] 100; Rarotonga 4,500; Mangeea [Mangaia] 2,000 (“This is the supposed number of Mangeeans [Mangaians] according to what we saw; but it is not improbable there may be as many more.”) Total 10,180.

[4] Rev. Aaron Buzacott, Rarotonga 1 April 1828, SOAS, SSL Box 6, Folder 6, Jacket B. Interestingly, when the Rev. James C. Vivian, visited Mangaia in June 1871 and preached in Tahitian, “many of the older people expressed with considerable warmth, the delight which they felt in hearing the Tahitian language … intimating their great attachment to the Tahitian teachers from whom they first heard the word of God” (Rev. James C. Vivian, *Voyage on the John Williams from Tahiti to Sydney, 1 April 1871 – 6 February 1872*, SOAS, SSJ, File 159 (Box 11).

[5] Charles Barff, 23 October 1827, Huahine, SOAS, SSL Box 6, Folder 3, Jacket C.

[6] In Tahiti a learner or disciple of Christianity was referred to as a ‘ha’api'i parau’– in the Cook Islands a ‘kai parau’. ‘Parau’ is the Tahitian word for ‘book’ and ‘kai’ means ‘eat’ or ‘consume’. The term came to mean ‘to receive religious instruction’ as opposed to the tūtae ‘āuri – those ‘rusted on’ to the old religion. See Savage, 2012 [1962]; 82, 423; Gill 1894; 336.

[7] The “old worm-eaten wooden one” with “an equally old font of letter” (Buzacott, 1966; 68).

[8] The press was located at the Takamoa Theological College, Avarua, Rarotonga.

[9] Report to Directors, 24 January 1845, SOAS, SSL, Box 18, Folder 3, Jacket A.

[10] W. Gill, Letter, 28 July 1843, SOAS, SSL, Box 16, Folder 5, Jacket A.

[11] In 1842, the *Sydney Herald*, under the joint ownership of John Fairfax and his son Charles, became the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

[12] Crocombe, 1983; 109.

[13] Gill, for example, credits the Rarotongan evangelist Maretu, who learned and taught in the Mangaian language (tara Mangaia), with helping to preserve that island’s language. Noting the strong influence of Tahitian on the Austral Islands languages, Gill writes, “And but for Maretu the same fate would have befallen the language of Mangaia” (1876; 103). Marjorie Crocombe observes that “In fact the Tahitian teachers were so disorganised and ineffectual that there was little chance of their destroying the local language” (Maretu, 1983; 4).

[14] These documents formed the basis for William Wyatt Gill’s books *From Darkness to Light* and *Historical Sketches* and can be found in the Sir George Grey collection and in the Polynesian Society papers. They remain to be published in their original form.

[15] See Crocombe, 2003; 81 - 91.

[16] The LMS had schools in each of the five Rarotonga settlements – Avarua, Arorangi, Ngatangi'ia, Titikaveka and Matavera.

[17] Makea Takau, Ariki, Chief of the Government of the Cook Islands to Governor, Pacific Islands. Enclosure No. 1, Moss to Governor, 11 July 1895, *Pacific Islands, Proceedings of the British Resident, Rarotonga.* 1896, A.- 3; 2.

[18] The preamble to the bill states, “Whereas it is desirable that the English language should be so taught to the Māori people in order that they may be able at the least to read freely in that language, and whereas it is desirable to secure such teaching in schools established or that may be established by other than Māori teachers in the Cook Islands….” the government certification of schools would be conditional on “the provision is made for the teaching of English.”

[19] “At the Roman Catholic School at Rarotonga, kept by the Sisters of St. Joseph, some 50 pupils, many being children of the foreign residents, are being carefully instructed, some in the higher branches and accomplishments.” (*New Zealand Mail*, 5 October 1904).

[20] Rev. J. K. Hutchin, Rarotonga – Attachment to Rev. J. H. Cullen, Mangaia to Foreign Secretary, LMS, London, 11 December, 1897, SOAS, SSL, Box 44, Folder 3, Jacket B.

[21] In September 1894, a small group of Seventh Day Adventists arrived in Rarotonga, followed on 30 October 1894 by two Catholic priests from Tahiti. The LMS missionary Rev. J. K. K. Hutchin observed, “They promise free education to the children of any who will join them. Music, English and French are to be taught amongst other things. Free education will be a great temptation I feel sure to the Rarotongans. They are all intensely anxious that their children should be taught English ….” (SOAS, SSL, 18 January 1895, Box 44, Folder 3, Jacket A).

[22] Rev. H. Bond James, 8 February 1905 SOAS, SSL, Box 48. The LMS feared that the Catholic Mission was “pertinaciously endeavouring to get into Mitiaro, Atiu and the Northern Islands, that is into those islands where there is no resident European missionary.” Rev. J. J. K. Hutchin, 20 September 1904, SOAS, SSL, Box 48, 1903 - 4.

[23] Miss A.E. Large, Tereora, Rarotonga to Foreign Secretary, LMS London, 29 January, 1899, SOAS, SSL Box 45, Folder 1, Jacket A.

[24] Rev. J. H. Cullen, Letter to the *New Zealand Herald*, 24 June 1898, reproduced in *Fugitive Papers* (Mangaia), No. 4, September 1898, pp. 5 – 6.

[25] The school day ran from “dawn to 8.30 am” and from 9.30 to 12.30 for selected students; Rev. H. Bond James, 28 July 1903, SOAS, SSL, Box 48, 1903-4. An article in the *New Zealand Mail* in 1904, gave the school hours and language of instruction for LMS schools as follows – "These schools are opened three days a week - Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays - hours of instruction 6 a.m. to 7 a.m. by native teacher in Māori; 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. by the missionary, part in English part in Māori." (*New Zealand Mail*, 5 October 1904).

[26] Rev. H. Bond James, February 1903, SOAS, SSL, Box 48, 1903 - 4. “The parents are very anxious that I should teach their children the English language.”

[27] Rev. J. J. K. Hutchin, 19 January 1904, SOAS, SSL, Box 48, 1903 - 4. Hutchin was anxious that the LMS send him “some Christian Englishman … that can teach the children English” to counter the work of the Roman Catholics on the island. *Report of the Visit of the Deputation to the Islands of Atiu, Mitiaro and Mauke… May 1904,* SOAS, SSL, Box 48.

[28] Minutes of the Rarotonga District Committee, Rev. W. N. Lawrence, Aitutaki, to Foreign Secretary, LMS London, 28 May, 1898, SOAS, SSL, Box 44, Folder 5, Jacket A.

[29] The Resident Commissioner Lt. Col. Gudgeon articulated a plan to operate Avarua School as a “Normal School”, that is, a school for training teachers, “but nothing has been done.” Rev. J. J. K. Hutchin, 20 September 1904, SOAS, SSL, Box 48, 1903 - 4.

[30] Percy Hall, 30 June 1903, SOAS, SSL, Box 48, 1903 - 4.

[31] It was not until 2004 that Cook Islands Māori became an official language alongside English under the Te Reo Māori Act of that year.

[32] Griffith, Maslen and Harvey, 1997; 247 - 9.

[33] Exceptions were the publication from 1939 of the Māori language newspaper *Te Akatauira* by Albert Henry and the Adventist journal *Tua tua-mou* [Truth], published from 1907 to 1947.
[34] Ina Herrmann (pers. com., 17 April 2024) points out that, "Schools were at liberty to determine the practice of this transitional model."
[35] "Once again, schools were free to determine the application of policy, with no monitoring by the Ministry. Inconsistencies across schools in its application were common." Ina Herrmann (pers. com., 17 April 2024).
[36] Ngavaevae Papatua, Secondary Māori Advisor, Cook Islands Ministry of Education, pers. com., 15 May 2023.
[37] https://www.mfem.gov.ck/_files/ugd/dbdf40_d34e236a625849118faf85e54797b7e6.pdf
[38] cited in Crocombe, 2019.
[39] Ina Herrmann (pers. com., 17 April 2024).

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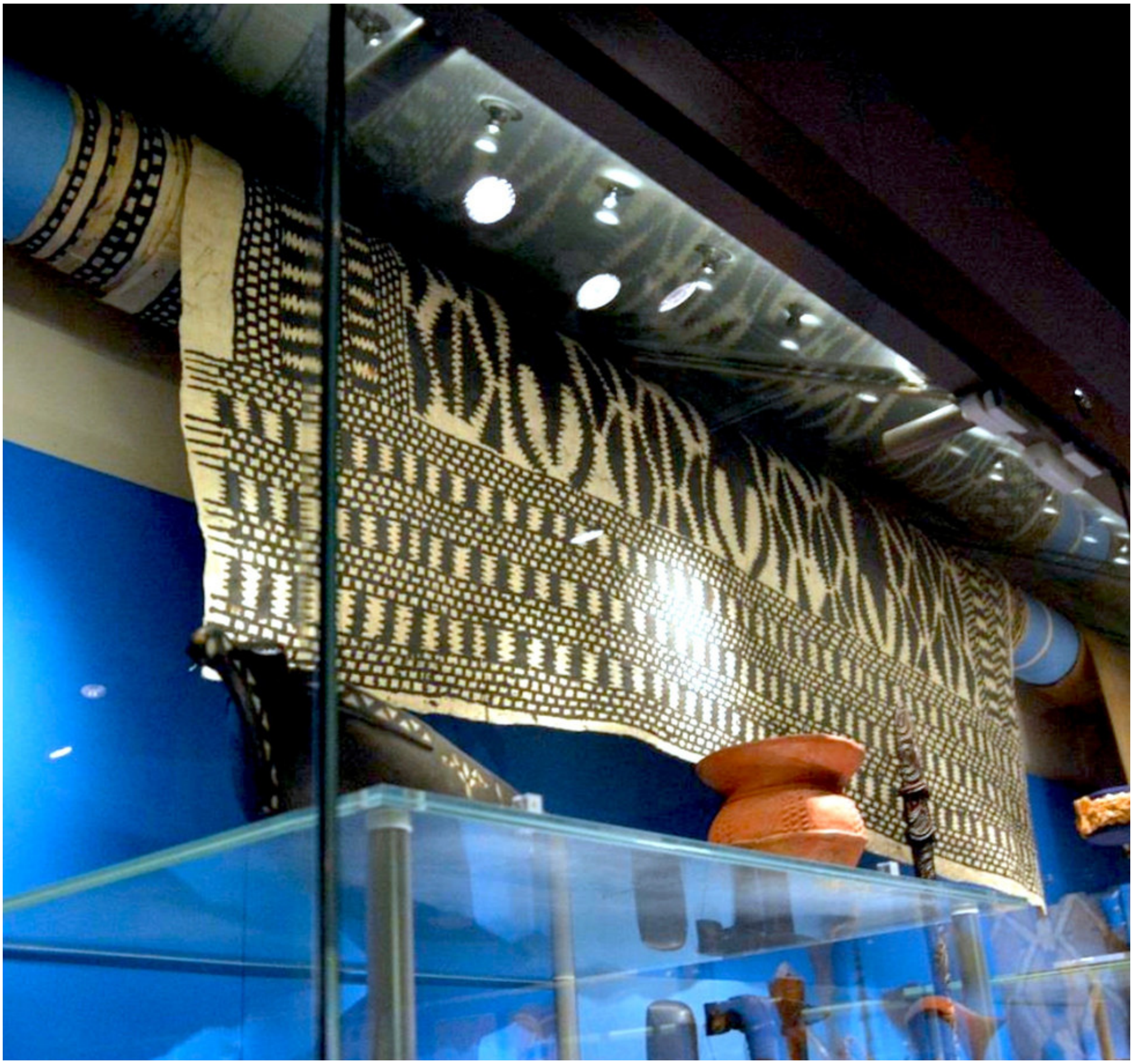
## Some early language texts

A small digitized collection of 19th and early 20th century Cook Islands Language Texts can be found in the collection of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and located in digital format at https://digital.soas.ac.uk/rarotongan

The Sir George Grey collection of Cook Islands Texts from the 19th century is available in digital format at https://kura.aucklandlibraries.govt.nz



*The Exeter Cloth on display at the Royal Albert Museum and Art Gallery, Exeter, England*

# E Veri Tara Tena! – Exploring the Origins of Six Remarkable Tapa

ROD DIXON AND JEAN TEKURA MASON

On 8 August 2005, Dr. Steven Hooper, Director of the Sainsbury Research Unit at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, University of East Anglia emailed Marjorie Crocombe in Rarotonga, Cook Islands, requesting her assistance in deciphering a short script on the border of a bark cloth in the Ethnobotany Collection, Kew Gardens, London. The intention was to help establish the cloth's island of origin, prior to its display in the exhibition and catalogue *Pacific Encounters: Art & Divinity in Polynesia, 1760 - 1860* (Norwich, 21 May – 31 August 2006).

Marjorie was able to confirm that "certainly the language is Cook Islands Māori." [1] This supported Simon Kooijman's earlier attribution of the Kew cloth to the Cook Islands, based on design motifs (Kooijman,1972; 59; Hooper, 2006; 224).  It also assisted in providing an approximate dating of the cloth to the late 1820s when the Cook Islands Māori language first became a written language. This, in turn, challenged the attribution to the Cook voyages of a very similar cloth in the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter.

Seventeen years later, with the discovery of several very similar cloths, the matter of their provenance and date remains open to debate. In this paper, initiated at Marjorie's suggestion, we review the available evidence and identify some of what remains problematic in determining the origin and dating of the six known cloths.

The cloths are located in the –

(1)  Hooper Collection, dispersed in one of several auctions between 1976 and 1982 – the current whereabouts of the cloth are unknown;
(2)  Kew Gardens, Ethnobotany Collection in London;
(3)  Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter, England;
(4)  Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC;
(5)  British Museum, London;
(6)  Yale Peabody Museum, New Haven, CT.

## Hooper Collection

James Thomas Hooper (1897 - 1971) was a British private collector of ethnographic material, focusing mainly on Polynesia. After his death in 1971, his collection was auctioned at several sales held by Christie's Auction House in London between 1976 and 1982.

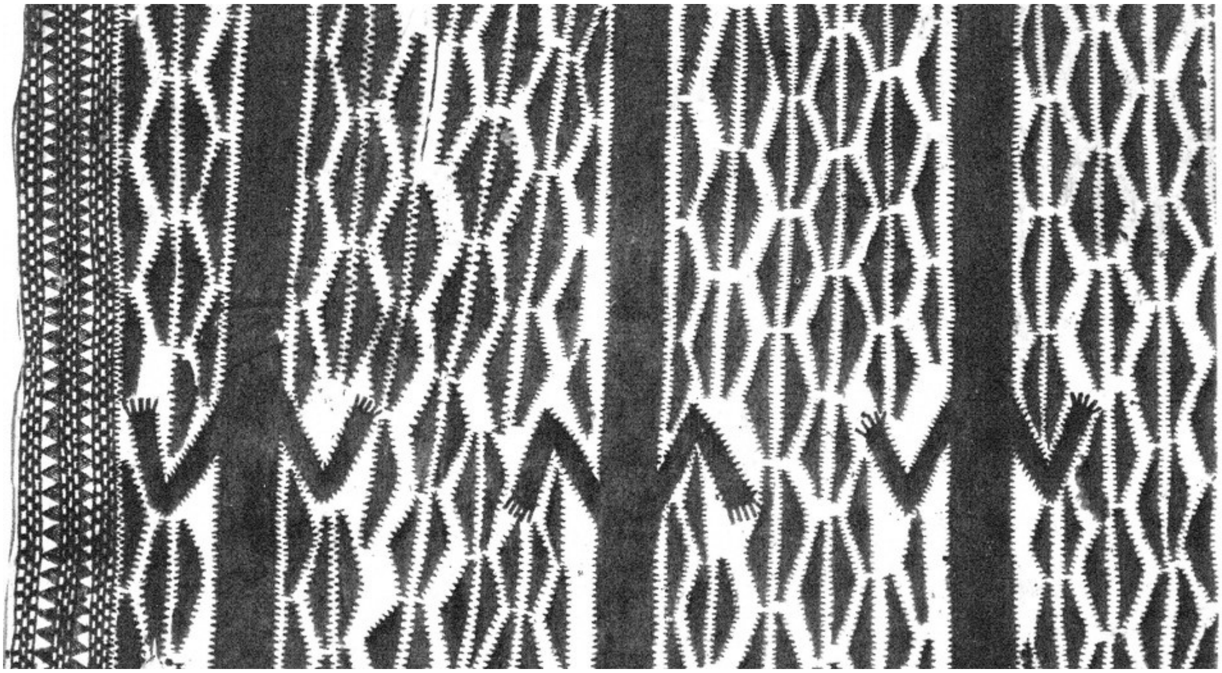


*Figure 1 - Fragment of the Hooper cloth - Lot 109, Oceanic Art from the James Hooper Collection Auction catalogue, published by Christie's, London, 17 June 1980*

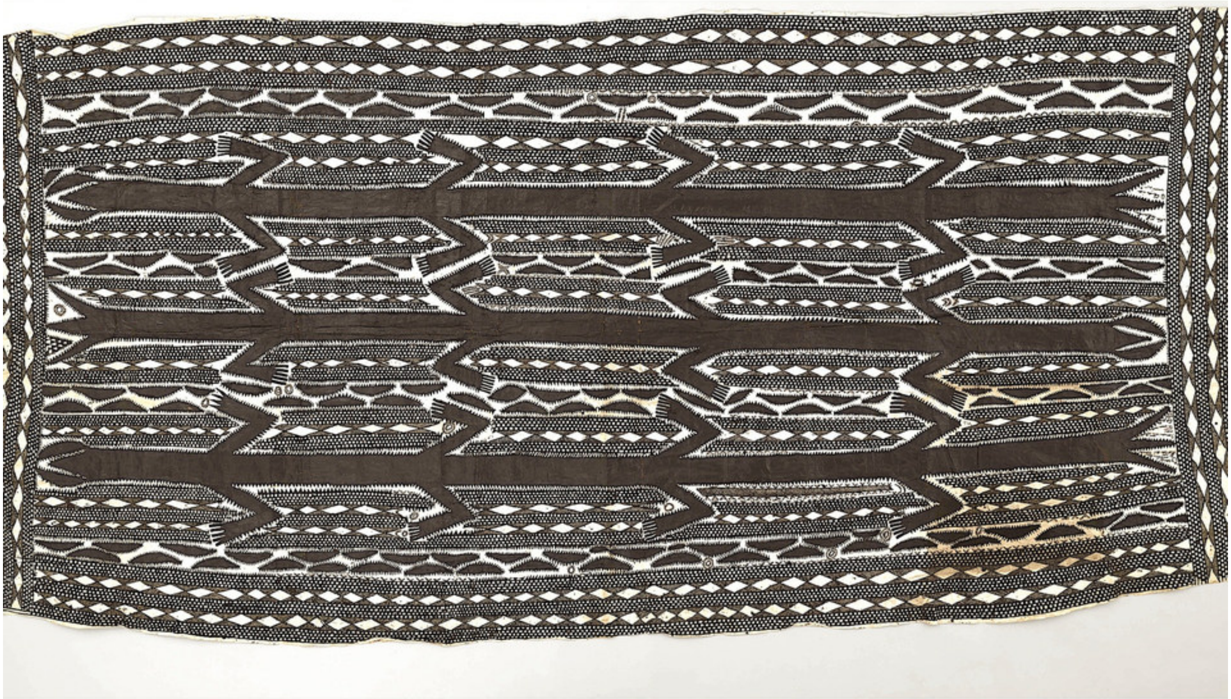


*Figure 2 - EBC42953, Ethnobotany Collection, Kew Gardens, London*

The Christie's catalogue for the 1980 sale (Lot 109) describes the Hooper cloth (Fig. 1) as "Printed in black on a cream ground with three long zoomorphic figures, each with two pairs of limbs, panels of serrated triangular motifs between the borders with two bands of cross-hatched triangles between chequered panels, cut at one end …" [2]

James Hooper's grandson, Dr. Steven Hooper adds that in the case of the three zoomorphic creatures, "the arms/legs on the centre one went in the opposite direction to the other two, like the one in Kew …." [3]

The original label identifies the cloth as one of two items – "Tongataboo girdle, ditto drefs. Mr. Green, Birmingham, 1833."

Steven Hooper suspects that "'drefs' [4] refers to this cloth, as 'girdle' is quite specific and may refer to a wraparound Tongan sisi fale. The two objects may have been assumed to come from the same place (Tonga), by whoever wrote the 1833 label." [5]

Kaeppler disregarded a Tongan attribution for a very similar cloth – the Exeter cloth below – as it was "unlike any known Tongan barkcloth in both design and in the quality of the material (which is more like central Polynesian)." [6] The Christie's catalogue also queried a Tongan attribution, noting that "Linear borders of chequered and triangular design are known from eastern Fiji …. However, a similar border is also found on the black and white binding of the large Rarotonga staff god in the British Museum collected by John Williams …. Kooijman is also inclined to look for the origin of this unusual bark cloth from amongst the Cook Islands (Kooijman, 1972, pp. 56 - 61)."

Speculating on the identity of the recorded donor, "Mr Green, Birmingham, 1833", the Christie's catalogue notes a Mr. J. Green of Birmingham who appears in the 3rd edition of William Bullock's "Catalogue of the Liverpool Museum", 1801 as a donor to that Museum. The Liverpool catalogue includes a number of items *Bought from the South Seas by Captain Cook* which includes *"specimens of the Painted or Stained Cloth of the South Sea Islands."* However, the Christie's catalogue concludes, "It is not possible to be certain if Mr. Green of the label donated 'Cook' pieces or if this [the Hooper cloth] was among them …." [7]

There is another, equally speculative, link between "Mr. Green, Birmingham, 1833" and the Hooper cloth. In 1833, the Rev. John Williams visited Rarotonga and Tonga, including the island of Tongatapu (or 'Tongataboo' in his journals,) and may have collected both the cloth (at Rarotonga) and the girdle (at 'Tongataboo'). Williams returned to England in 1834 and commenced a tour of several cities to report on the progress of the London Missionary Society's work in the South Seas. This included an address to the Carr's Lane Congregational Union Chapel in Birmingham [8] of which Williams' biographer Ebenezer Prout writes "his associations … were peculiar, and his obligations to its pastors and their people great" not least because its "benevolent friends have sent me abundant supplies of ironmongery, by which I was enabled to make my way with greater facility into heathen lands. For these gifts, I now most gratefully tender my acknowledgments." [9] The conduit for Birmingham ironmongery was his close friend the Rev. Timothy East, [10] Minister of Carr's Lane, whom Williams acknowledges as his benefactor in the provision of lathes, etc. [11] Williams was a trained ironmonger and used these skills and the donated ironmongery to oversee construction of the missionary ship *Messenger of Peace* – the vessel that carried him to and from the Cook Islands, Tonga, Sāmoa, the Society Islands and beyond. Among the 31 'Greens' listed in the Birmingham Street Directory for 1835, is a Mr. Joseph Green of 85 Steelhouse Lane, "brass founder" [12], a possible source of Williams' ironmongery and a possible beneficiary of a gift of cloth from Williams. [13]

## Kew Gardens, London

The Kew Gardens cloth (Fig. 2) is described as a "particularly thick laminated 19th century 'tikoru' [14] – non-figurative decorative features, typical of Rarotongan tapa." [15]

The cloth which measures 3.7 metres by 1.8 metres by 1.8mm thick, was donated to Kew by "probably William Miller Christy" in 1850. [16]

Steven Hooper in *Pacific Encounters, Art and Divinity in Polynesia, 1760 - 1860*, writes –

> Few barkcloths survive with this distinctive design incorporating multi-legged creatures and none has a clear provenance. A similar example in Exeter [see below] has been ascribed to one of Cook's voyages (Kaeppler 1978; 160, 164; Pole and Doyal 2004; no. 51) but that attribution is challenged by this cloth which bears written inscriptions in the same dye as the designs and which must therefore be contemporary with them. Several of the words are in a Cook Islands language (Aaron Marsters, Marjorie Crocombe, personal communication) which supports Kooijman's suggestion for their provenance (1972; 59). Cook Islands languages only began to be written in the 1820s, which dates this cloth to that period at the earliest. The matter would appear to be resolved by the similarity of the border of this cloth to the black-and-white chequer-board of the roll of barkcloth on the large Rarotongan staff god. (Hooper, 2006; 224).

## Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC

The Smithsonian cloth (Fig. 3) measures 415 cms by 192 cms and is described as a "Large, light tan bark cloth with painted designs of three stylized lizards extending over the entire length of the cloth. The spaces between the lizards and the borders at both ends are covered with linear and triangular design elements in black and dark brown." [17]

The donor's name is given as the United States Exploring Expedition (1838 - 42) with a Smithsonian acquisition date of 1858. Its original tag notes; "Take miole tapa. This has been considered very fine." It is listed in the Smithsonian's Peale catalogue as # 1055: "Mosquito or bed curtain, on which is represented by painting, a large species of reptile formerly held sacred, and now dreaded by the natives of Upolu, one of the Samoan Islands."

The cloth has numerous Smithsonian attributions – "'Hawaii?' 'Samoa?' 'Fiji'" but the Smithsonian meta data adds, "Dr Adrienne Kaeppler, former Curator for Oceania Ethnology at the Smithsonian believed it was manufactured in the Cook or Austral Islands."

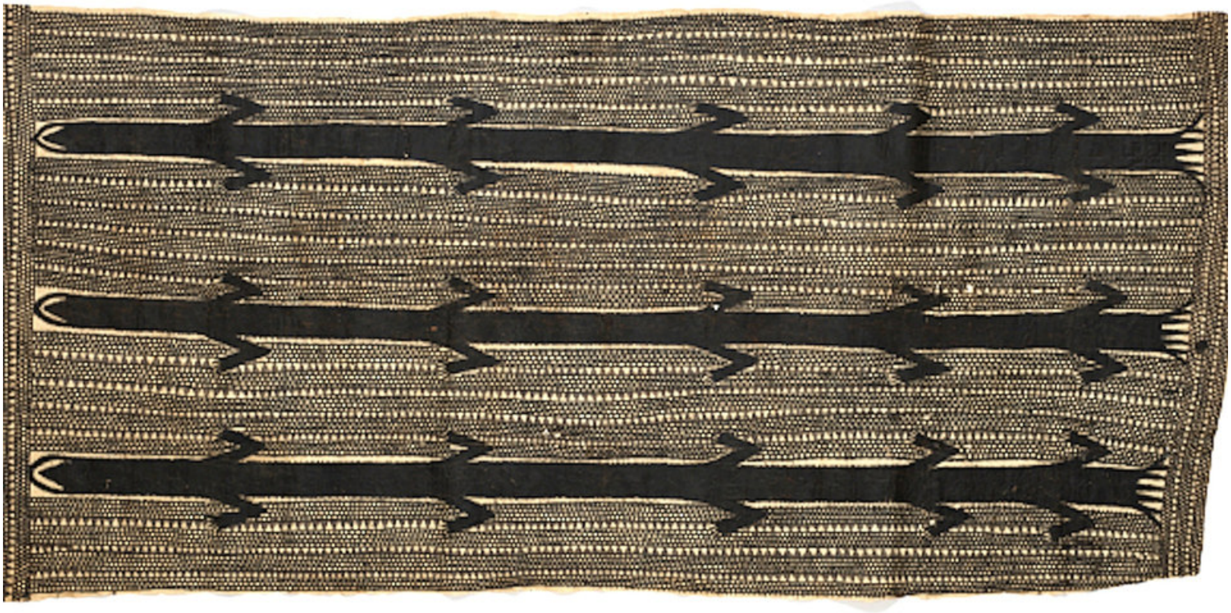


*Figure 3 - E003450, Bark Cloth, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington*

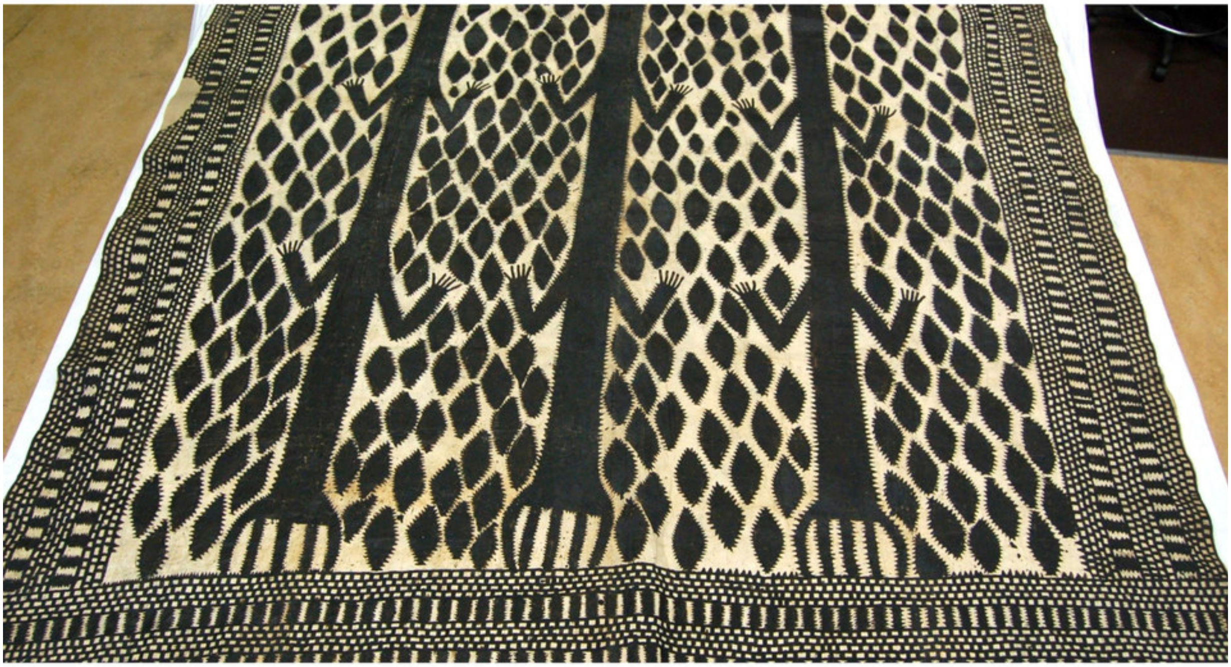


*Figure 4 - British Museum, Oc.1910.257, detail of barkcloth, attributed to Rarotonga, acquired from London Missionary Society, © The Trustees of the British Museum*

## **British Museum** [18]

The British Museum cloth, Oc.1910.257 (Fig. 4) is described in the museum's Christy collection register, dated 1910, as “Bark cloth, large sheet border of parallel lines chequered & crossbars. Centre divided into panels by broad black lines with human arms at intervals filling of ‘leaf’ patterns. 87" x 125" [318 cms by 221 cms].”

The cloth was purchased by the British Museum from the London Missionary Society (LMS) in 1910, but its date of production is noted as “1800 - 1825 (Early 1800s)”. It is described as Rarotongan.

Catalogues for the LMS Museum dated 1828 and c.1860 and the description of museum objects sent for exhibition in Paris in 1867 make general reference to specimens of “cloth made of bark of the paper mulberry tree”, but include no specific reference to this particular cloth. [19]

Andy Mills examined the cloth as part of the “Situating Pacific barkcloth production in time and place” project (2015 - 2018) and advises the fabric is 'aute or paper mulberry with a candlenut sap-soot paint. [20]

## Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter

The Exeter cloth (Figs. 5 and 6) (Accession Loan No. E1263) measures 530 cms by 178 cms and is described as a “Large rectangle of cloth with smooth white surface; central panel of black toothed triangles and millipede-like creatures with jaws at each end and five-fingered legs, border of brick-wall bands and zig-zag lines.”

Tony Eccles notes its original attribution “to the 1868 donation made by Henry Vaughan of Captain Cook material ... Vaughan had … been given a group of ‘curiosities’ by his father, who had purchased them from the auction of the Sir Ashton Lever collection in 1806.” [21]

On this basis, Kaeppler considered Kooijman’s (1972; 59) suggestion of a Rarotongan origin for the Exeter cloth as “unlikely”, noting its attribution to Tahiti despite being “unlike any known Tahitian barkcloth.” [22]

Subsequent research suggests that the Exeter “barkcloth does not belong to this [Henry Vaughan] donation but another made by a Mrs. Vaughan of 5 Belgrave Terrace, Torquay” [23] – breaking the link to the Cook voyages and the Leverian Museum.

## Yale Peabody

The Yale Peabody cloth (Fig. 7) is described as “1 roll of fiber cloth [tapa] probably Oceania.” No dimensions are given for the cloth. [24]

Roger Colton at the Peabody Yale Museum advises that “this object came to the museum in the 1930s with very little associated information. It was part of the collection of Fred Braun that was purchased by Charles Schuchert and donated to the museum. Most of the collection was

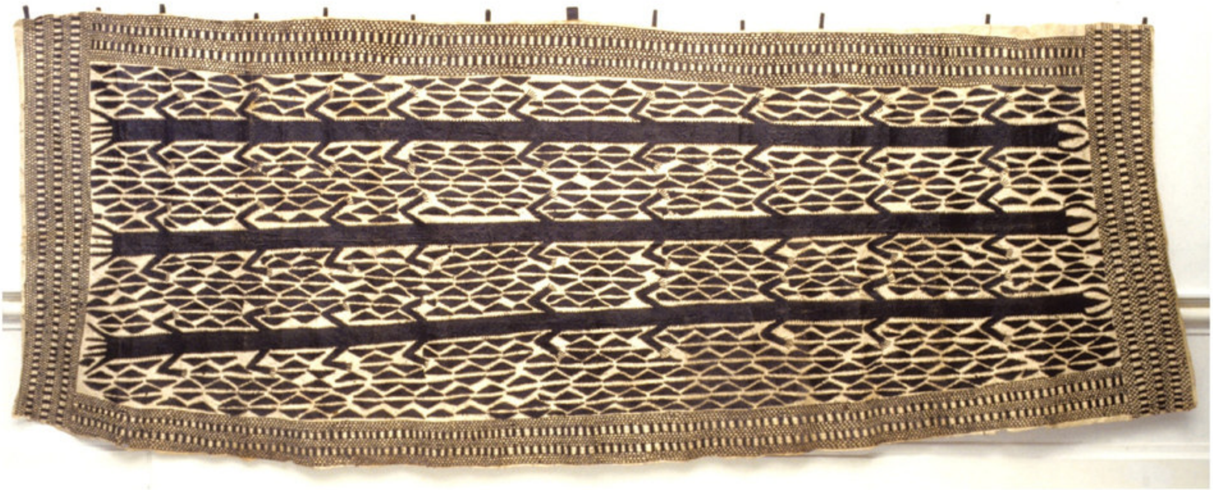


*Figure 5 - E1263, Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery, Exeter City Council, England*

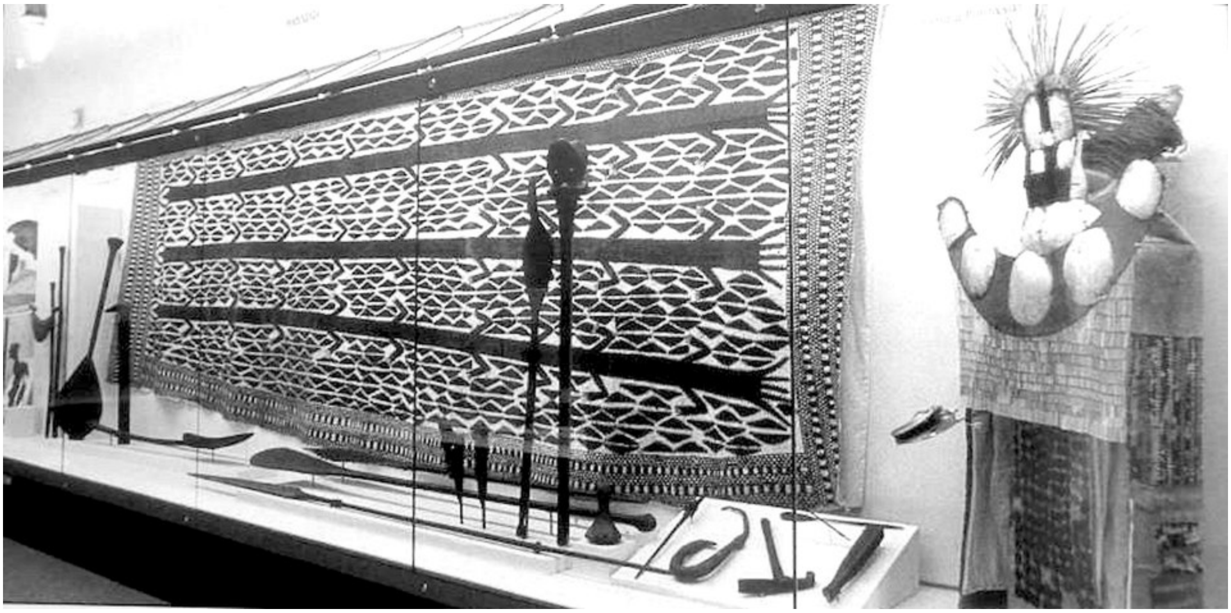


*Figure 6 - The Exeter Cloth on display at the Royal Albert Museum and Art Gallery, Exeter, England (photo – Pole and Doyal, 2004)*

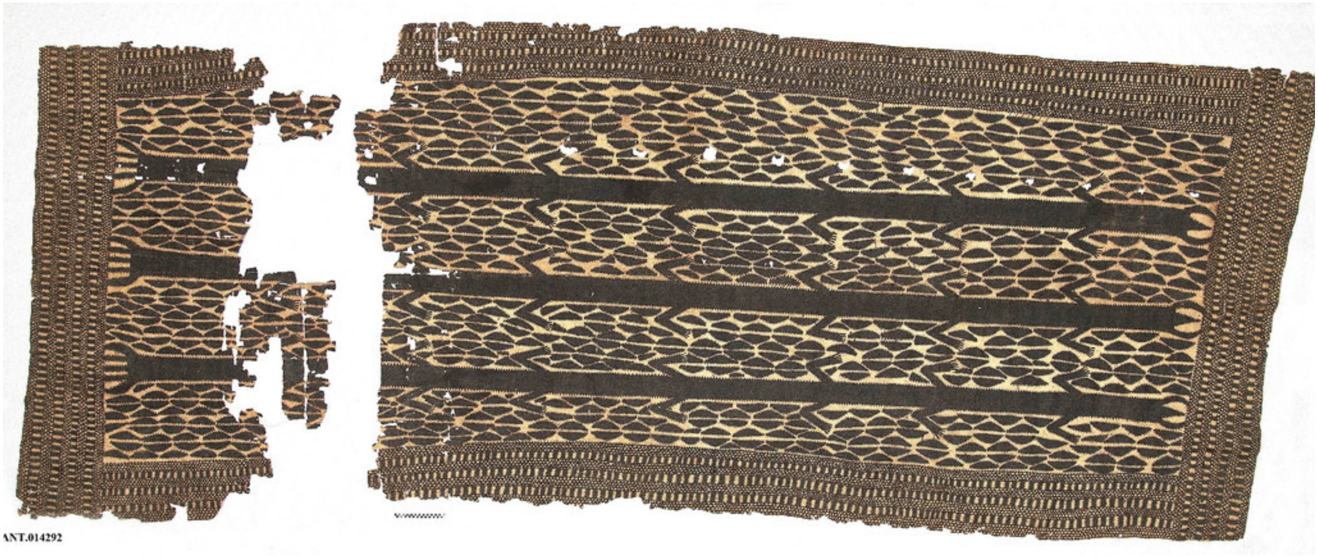
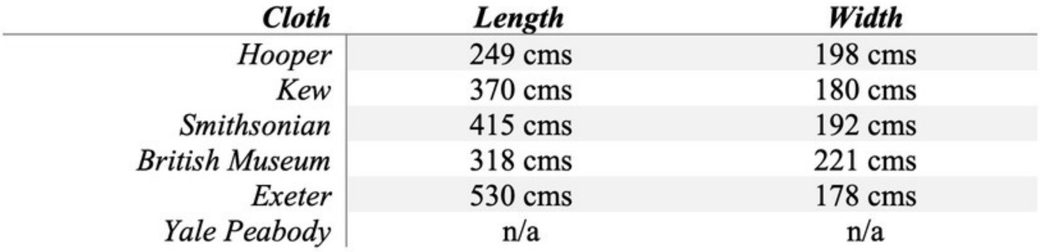


*Figure 7 - ANT-014292, Yale Peabody Museum (photo - Guth, W., 2016, Yale Peabody Museum)*



| Cloth | Length | Width |
|---|---|---|
| *Hooper* | 249 cms | 198 cms |
| *Kew* | 370 cms | 180 cms |
| *Smithsonian* | 415 cms | 192 cms |
| *British Museum* | 318 cms | 221 cms |
| *Exeter* | 530 cms | 178 cms |
| *Yale Peabody* | n/a | n/a |

*Table 1 - Dimensions of five of the six known cloths*

fossils and minerals with a relatively limited number of anthropological objects, primarily archaeological artifacts from Europe. I am sorry not to be able to provide any more detail." [25]

Frederick Braun was a 19th century Cincinnati dealer in geological specimens and 'other curiosities' while Charles Schuchert (1858 - 1942) was a Cincinnati born Professor of Palaeontology who donated his estate to Yale Peabody.

## Cloth Size

The largest cloth is the Exeter cloth at 9.43m². The rest are between 5 and 8m² – *see Table 1*. These dimensions suggest the cloths may have had a public ceremonial rather than domestic use, such as an investiture, an 'o'ora (described below) or the ancient pure or prayer ceremony described by Papeiha in his account of Aitutaki at the time of early Christian contact –

> a great feast took place before the Marae called bure Arii [pure ariki], which is a general assembly of all the people of the island before the Marae. [T]he kings or rather all the family of the kings take their seats in separate situation from the common people. [T]hey cover themselves completely with cloth except a small part of their faces. [T]hey remain for a month sometimes longer before the Marae eating & drinking... [A]fter this the Priests & many of the people smear themselves with charcoal. [T]he people clothe with the finest of their cloth & make a tour round the Island previously to which they go to the Marae & cover the Kings with Cloth in great abundance. [T]he following morning they all leave the Marae every one with a large piece of wood on his shoulder which they use in the separation of their wrestlers – for when they leave the Marae they make a tour of the Island wrestling at every district – sometimes there are two or three in every district – this finishes the ceremony of the bure Arii…[26]

## Motifs

All six cloths combine several motifs of which the most prominent are the three elongated zoomorphic figures that span the length of each cloth. These figures comprise a long, spiky body, a head with antennae and a tail with 'terminal legs'. Along the length of the figures are several pairs of lizard-like legs, ranging between "two pairs of limbs" (the Hooper cloth) and nine pairs (the Exeter cloth).

The backgrounds of the six cloths are filled with either rori (sea cucumber) motifs [27] and/or diamond and/or triangle shapes. The borders of the cloths feature diamonds or triangles serrated lines and/or brick shapes.

The rori motif is prominent in another cloth (British Museum, Oc,EP.14 [28] comprising EP.14a and its fragment EP.14b) collected by Hugh Cuming in 1828 (Fig. 9). This cloth also incorporates the brick pattern, diamond and triangle borders evident on the 'centipede cloths' and on the tapa wrapping of the British Museum's Rarotongan Staff god (Oc1978,Q.845). In 1978, Kaeppler considered the attribution by Kooijman (1978; 59) of this cloth, EP. 14, to the Cook Islands as "unlikely", suggesting it "might also be from Cook's voyages" (Kaeppler, 1978; 160). However, an early label identifies the cloth as "Rarotonga, [collector] H. Cuming, 60." Hugh Cuming's association with Rarotonga is discussed below.

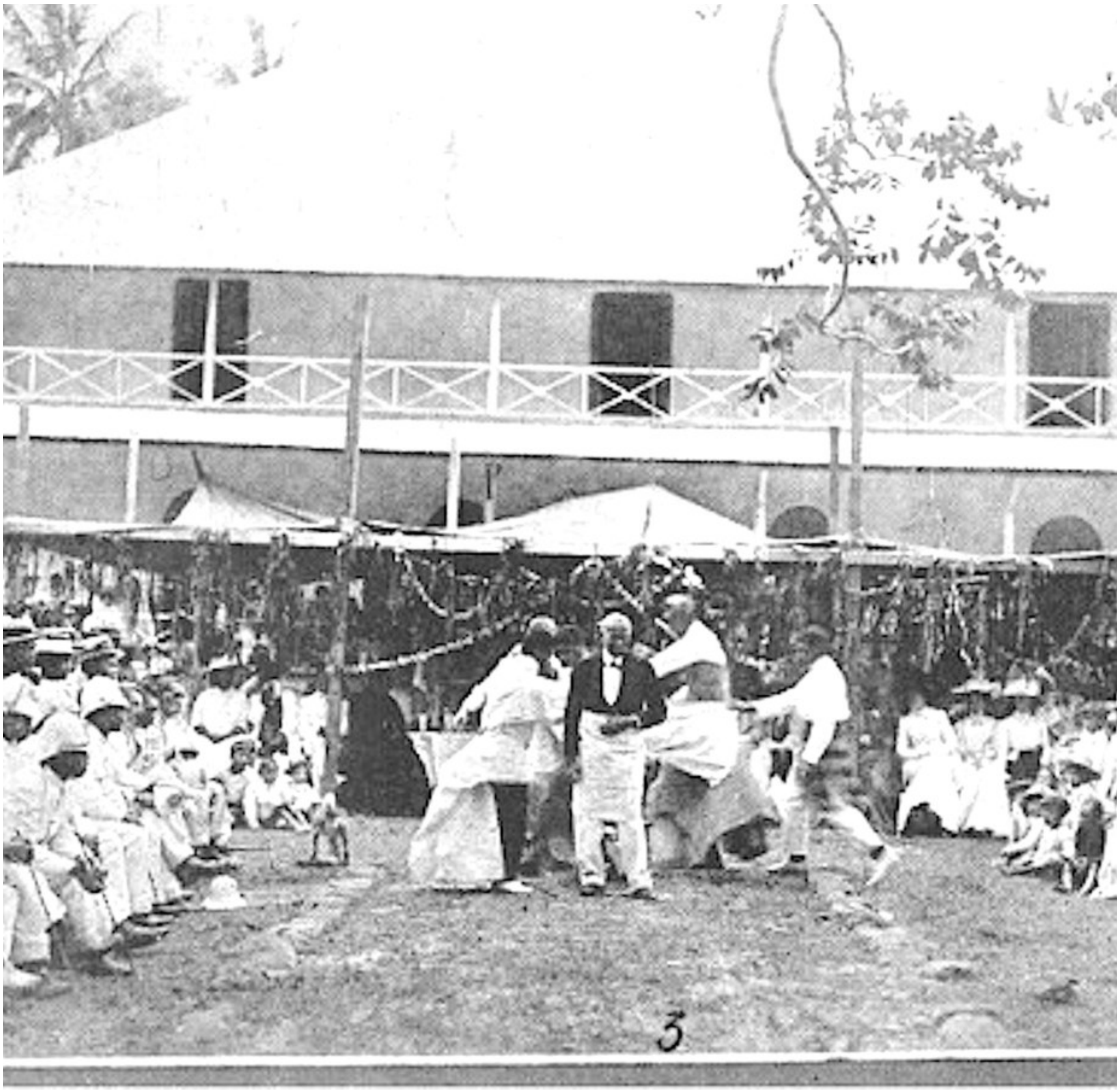


*Figure 8 - Rangi Makea ariki is wrapped in cloth during his 24 October 1911 investiture. The names for this ceremony include akamarokura'anga – wrapping in the red maro [of chieftainship] – or akatao'anga – placing the burden of office or akararangi'anga (making heavenly). The ceremony took place in the grounds of Taputapuatea, Rarotonga (photo - Stephen Savage, New Zealand Graphic, 29 November 1911).*

With its elongated spiked outline, antennaed head and ‘terminal legs’, the main motif of the cloths resembles a centipede, albeit a centipede augmented with lizard-like legs. The centipede is the symbol of the Polynesian ancestral hero Iro (Iro-nui-ma-oata), also known as Iro-tua-veri (Iro of the centipede back).

> When Iro came to land it was dark; he went up to where Tane's house stood and there lay down in front of the door, his face towards the earth. This was how Iro always lay when sleeping outside, in the attitude of a centipede, for his back gave off a phosphorescent glow like that of a centipede at night. [29]

Iro’s son Tai-te-ariki became the first Pa Ariki (Pa-te-ariki-upoko-tini) of the Takitumu district of Rarotonga and the centipede is Pa Ariki’s taura. In the Cook Islands, the term ‘taura’ refers to an object, person or animal, in this case a centipede, possessed or inspired by a god, in this case Iro.

## Stylistic similarities

The head and antennae of the centipede are identically figured in five of the pictured cloths. (The only available image of the Hooper cloth shows neither head nor tail).

In the British Museum, Yale Peabody, and Exeter cloths, the tail is shown with five ‘terminal legs’, in the Kew cloth three, and in the Smithsonian seven.

The British Museum, Yale Peabody, and Exeter cloths are alike in showing a background of rori (sea cucumber) with brick framing. The Kew cloth has a background of diamonds, rori and bricks, framed by a border of diamonds and bricks, while the Smithsonian has a triangle and brick background and framing. The Hooper cloth has a background of rori and a frame of bricks and triangles. In the Kew and Hooper cloths alone, the central of the three figures faces in the opposite direction to the other two.

Of the six cloths, the British Museum, Exeter, and Yale Peabody are stylistically the most similar, while the Smithsonian has variations in background, border and number of ‘terminal legs’.

The brick or chequer-board pattern is common to several of the ‘centipede cloths’ as well as numerous cloths collected by Hugh Cuming in 1828, attributed to Rarotonga. This pattern also appears on the cloth that wraps the Rarotongan staff god in the British Museum (Figure 10). The brick pattern additionally features on a maro or bark cloth girdle in the Cuming Museum, Southwark, London [30] “identified in the notes as from Raratonga” (Fig. 11). [31]

The serrated white and black bars on the borders of the British Museum cloth are also found in the Hunterian Museum maro or loincloth [32] (GLAHME - E.670) attributed to Rarotonga (Fig. 12). This design also appears on a headdress (Oc, LMS 88) in the British Museum attributed by Sir Peter Buck/Te Rangi Hiroa to Rarotonga (Fig. 13). [33] It is also seen in “a piece of native counterpane” in “*Specimens of bark cloth sent by John Williams to his sister”* in the Council for World Mission Archives in London, attributed to Rarotonga (Fig. 14).

The rori pattern found on all the cloths, except the Smithsonian, is repeated in Oc,EP.14.a collected by Hugh Cuming in 1828 (Fig.15) and attributed to Rarotonga. A similar motif appears on Oc1891, Q.1524, a tiputa or poncho whose acquisition details are unknown but is also attributed to the Cook Islands (Fig. 16).

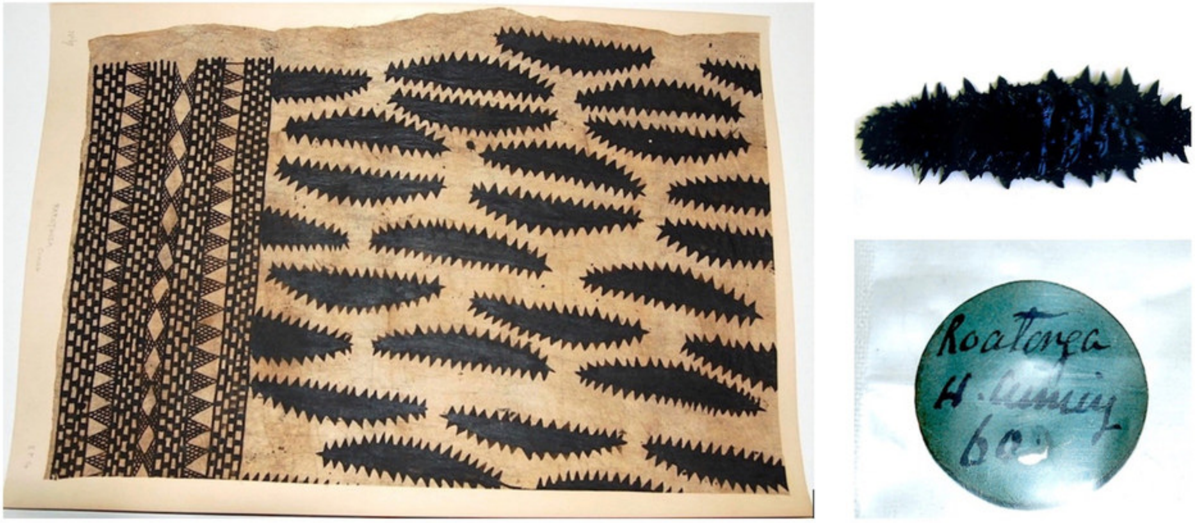
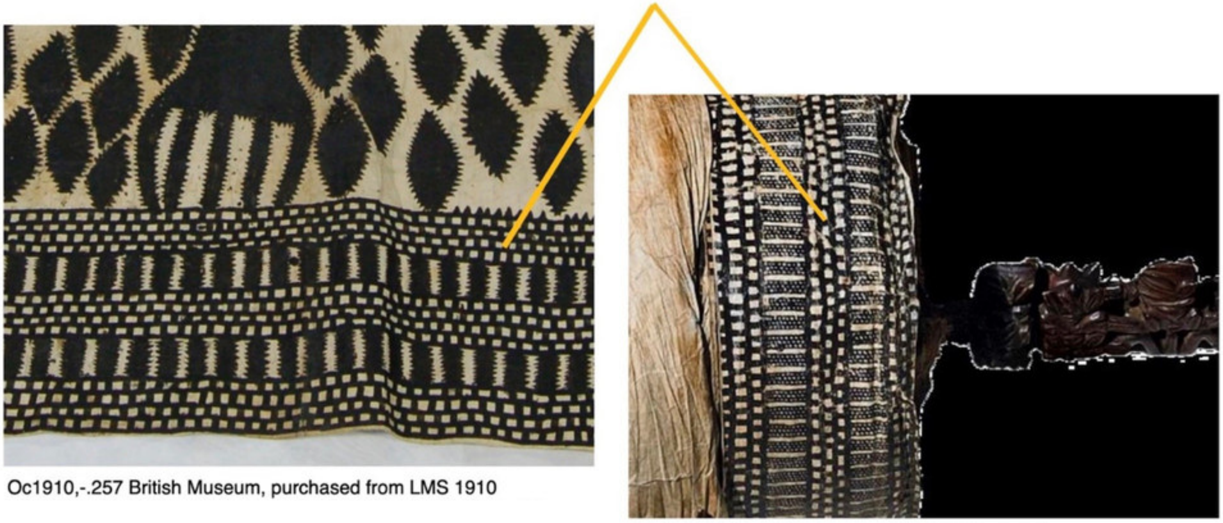
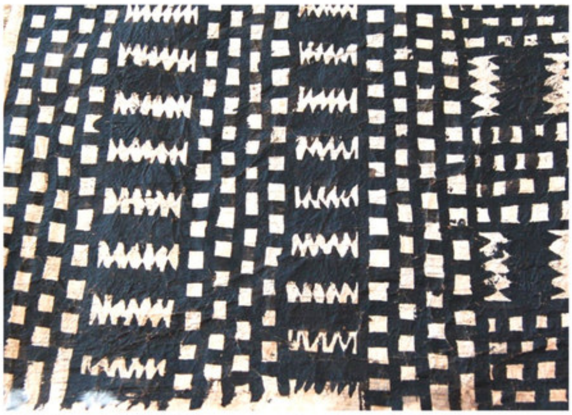


*Figure 9 - (Left) Oc,EP.14.b. Fragment of decorated barkcloth, Rarotonga, collected by Hugh Cuming; (bottom right) early label indicating "Roatonga [Rarotonga] H. Cuming 60") © The Trustees of the British Museum; (top right) Stichopus black or the Black Melting sea cucumber common on Rarotonga and the raised atolls of the southern Cooks (Cook Islands Biodiverity Database)*

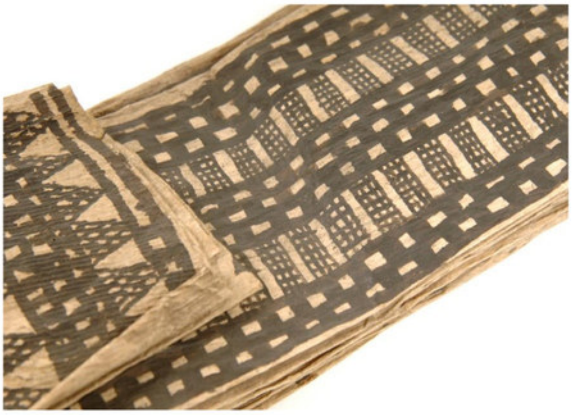

Oc1910,-.257 British Museum, purchased from LMS 1910

Oc1978,Q.845.a Rarotongan Staff God (Tangaroa)

*Figure 10 - Brick or chequer-board pattern on the border of the British Museum 'centipede cloth' (left) and the British Museum Rarotongan staff god (right)*

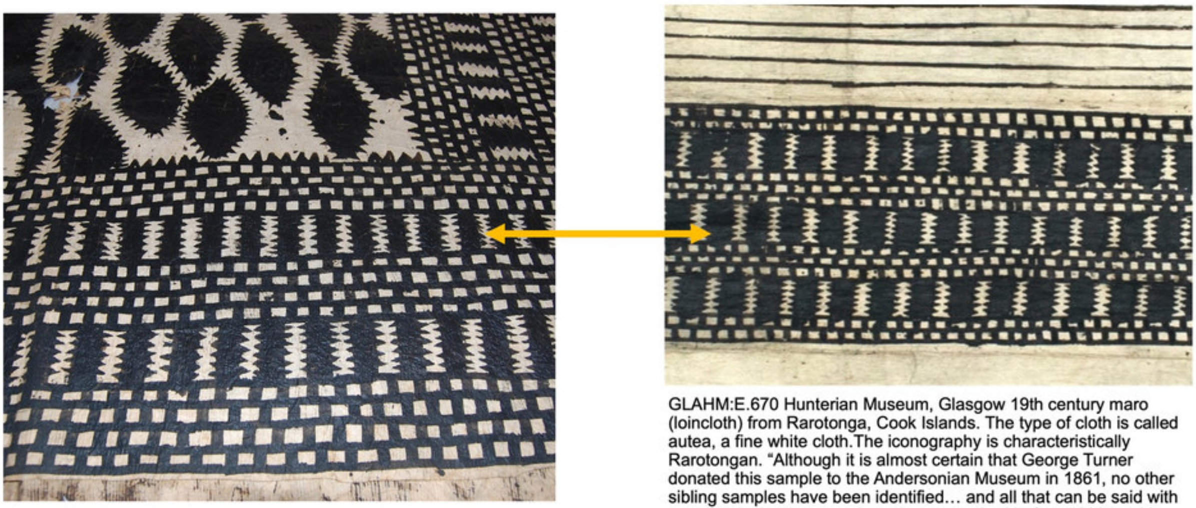


Oc1910,-.257 British Museum, purchased from LMS 1910
https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/E_Oc1910-257



Cuming Museum, Southwark, London - barkcloth girdle, "identified in the notes as from Raratonga"

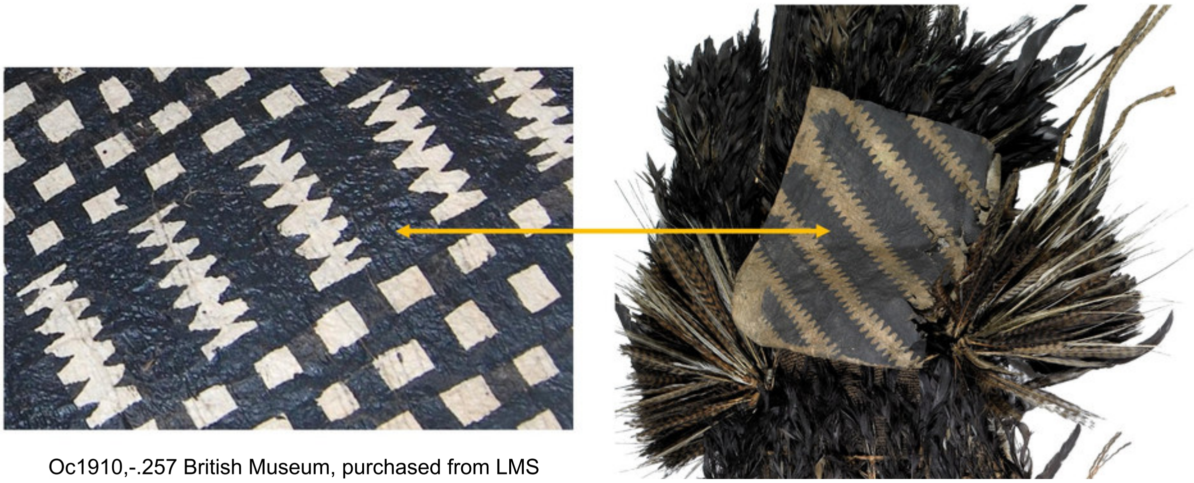
*Figure 11 - (Left) Brick or chequer-board pattern on the border of the British Museum 'centipede cloth' and (right) on a maro or girdle in the Cuming Museum, Southwark, London, attributed to Rarotonga.*



Oc1910,-.257 British Museum, purchased from LMS 1910

GLAHM:E.670 Hunterian Museum, Glasgow 19th century maro (loincloth) from Rarotonga, Cook Islands. The type of cloth is called autea, a fine white cloth.The iconography is characteristically Rarotongan. "Although it is almost certain that George Turner donated this sample to the Andersonian Museum in 1861, no other sibling samples have been identified… and all that can be said with certainty is that it cannot have been acquired before 1823, and it must have been here in Glasgow by 1889, when the barkcloth collection was effectively closed for well over a century."
http://collections.gla.ac.uk/#/details/ecatalogue/101558

*Figure 12 - (Left) Serrated black and white lines on the border of the British Museum 'centipede cloth' and (right) on a cloth in the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow, attributed to Rarotonga.*



Oc1910,-.257 British Museum, purchased from LMS 1910

Oc,LMS.88 British Museum, head-dress attributed to Tahiti but Buck (1944; 101-2) believes Rarotonga based on the barkcloth (originally a loan from the LMS, 1890).

*Figure 13 - (Left) Serrated black and white lines on the border of the British Museum 'centipede cloth' and (right) on a cloth attached to a head dress attributed to Rarotonga by Buck (1944; 101 - 2)*

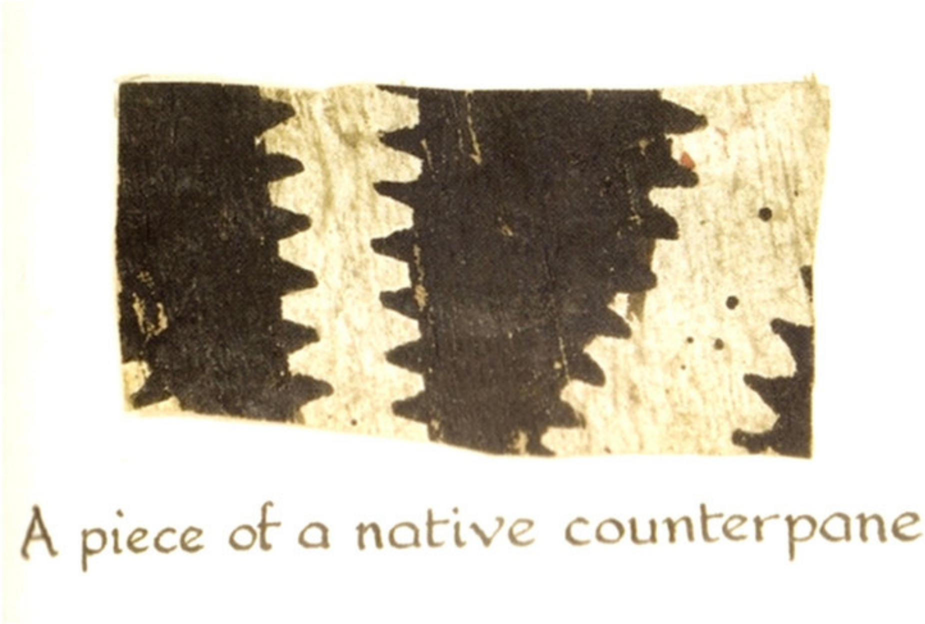
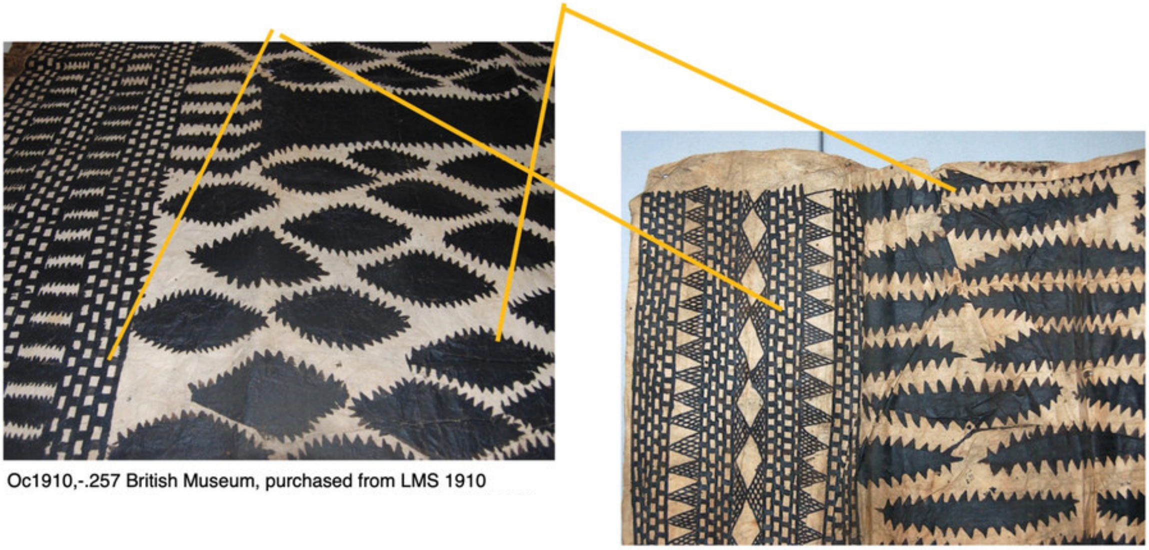


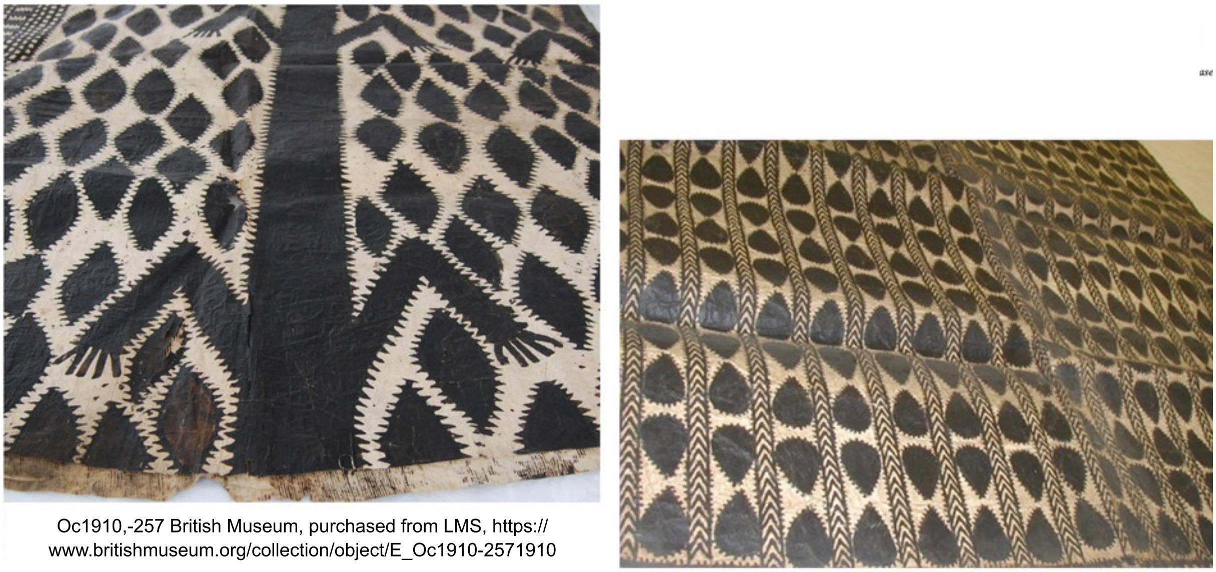
*Figure 14 - Sample of tapa with notched or serrated motif, in 'Specimens of bark cloth sent by John Williams to his sister' SOAS. Attributed by David King to Cook Islands*



Oc1910,-.257 British Museum, purchased from LMS 1910

Oc,EP.14.a British Museum, Rarotongan bark cloth - acquired from Hugh Cuming (1791-1865), Acquisition slip pre 1900

*Figure 15 - (Left) The brick pattern and rori or sea cucumber motifs on the British Museum 'centipede cloth' (Oc1910,-.257) and (right) on a cloth (Oc, EP.14.a) acquired by Hugh Cuming and attributed to Rarotonga*



Oc1910,-257 British Museum, purchased from LMS, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/E_Oc1910-2571910

Q81-OC-1524/ Oc1981,Q.1524 - British Museum poncho/tiputa -acquisiiton details unknown but attributed to Cook Islands (illustrating 'rori ngata kerekere' (sea cucumber) according to Mike Tavioni)

*Figure 16 - (Left) The rori or sea cucumber motif on the British Museum 'centipede cloth' (Oc1910,-.257) and (right) on a British Museum cloth Oc1981,Q.1524) attributed to Rarotonga*

## Writing on the Kew Cloth

The Kew cloth is unique, among the six, for containing an inscription in the Rarotongan language. In 2006, Steven Hooper cited Marjorie Crocombe's confirmation of the writing on the cloth as Rarotongan to reaffirm Kooijman's original attribution of the cloth to Rarotonga. [34]

Initially, in the Christian conversion of the Cook Islands, all scriptures and teaching were in the Tahitian language, "but it soon became apparent that the people would make but little progress, either in scriptural or general knowledge, until books were circulated among them in their own language, but before this could be accomplished, it was necessary to compile a correct dictionary and grammar of the language, every word of which had to be picked up, and every line written by the missionaries." [35] In 1827, Rev. John Williams began writing down the Rarotongan language, and by 1828, his translations of the book of John and St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians were available in print. By the mid-1830s, Williams reported there were "a greater number of persons who can read at Rarotonga than at any other of our stations…" [36]

Jean Mason has reaffirmed the inscription to be in the Rarotongan reo Māori, not the Tahitian reo Mā'ohi, citing for example the absence, of the Tahitian 'h' ('va'ine' not 'vahine') and the presence of the letter 'k' ('oko', 'ko te') and nasal consonant 'ng' in the inscription. [37]

While some of the text is indecipherable, it is possible to decipher and translate much of the rest.

The top panel (Fig. 18) reads "Orometua ko te ei [Te'ei] tane" that is, "Orometua [Pastor] Mr. Te'ei." Te'ei (or Tehei in Tahitian) [38] was born ca. 1784 at Borabora and served as the London Missionary Society pastor on Atiu, Cook Islands from 1823 to 1836; and later at Arorangi, Rarotonga from 1836 to 1838. [39]

The middle panel (Fig. 18) is more difficult to decipher – "E moni a te nei te ru a tengu oko […] mai […]"

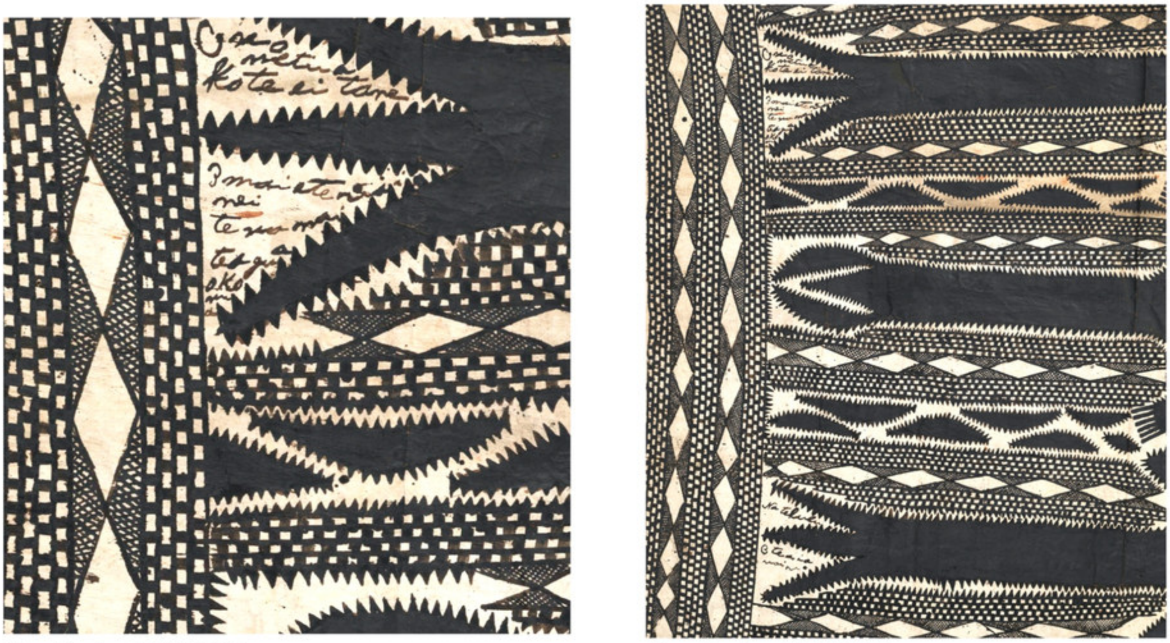
> "moni" – money; "oko" – to buy; "atengu"/ or possibly "atinga" – an offering to the pastor or church.

The bottom panels (Fig. 19) read "Na te lulu a Teaia vaine" – meaning "From the bale of cloth of Mrs. Teaia." There is no 'l' in either Tahitian or Rarotongan. Instead 'l' and 'r' are merged and represented orthographically as 'r'. 'Lulu' is thus 'ruru' or bale of cloth. Mrs. Teaia or "Teaia vaine" refers to the wife of the Rarotongan mata'iapo Teaia, one of the district chiefs of Ngatangi'ia.

Ellis in *Polynesian Researches* notes of barkcloth –

> When sufficiently bleached and dried, the cloth is folded along the whole length, rolled up into a bale, and covered with a piece of matting – this is called ruru vehe. The wealth of a chief is sometimes estimated by the number of these covered bales which he possesses. [40]

The inscription on the Kew cloth suggests it was presented to Pastor Te'ei from a bale of cloth held by the Teaia mataiapo family. The presentation of cloth and mats and other gifts to a departing pastor or oromentua is known as an 'o'ora. The presentation is carried out by a small



Kew Gardens EBC42953

Kew Gardens EBC42953

*Figure 17 - Script on EBC42953, Ethnobotany Collection, Kew Gardens, London*

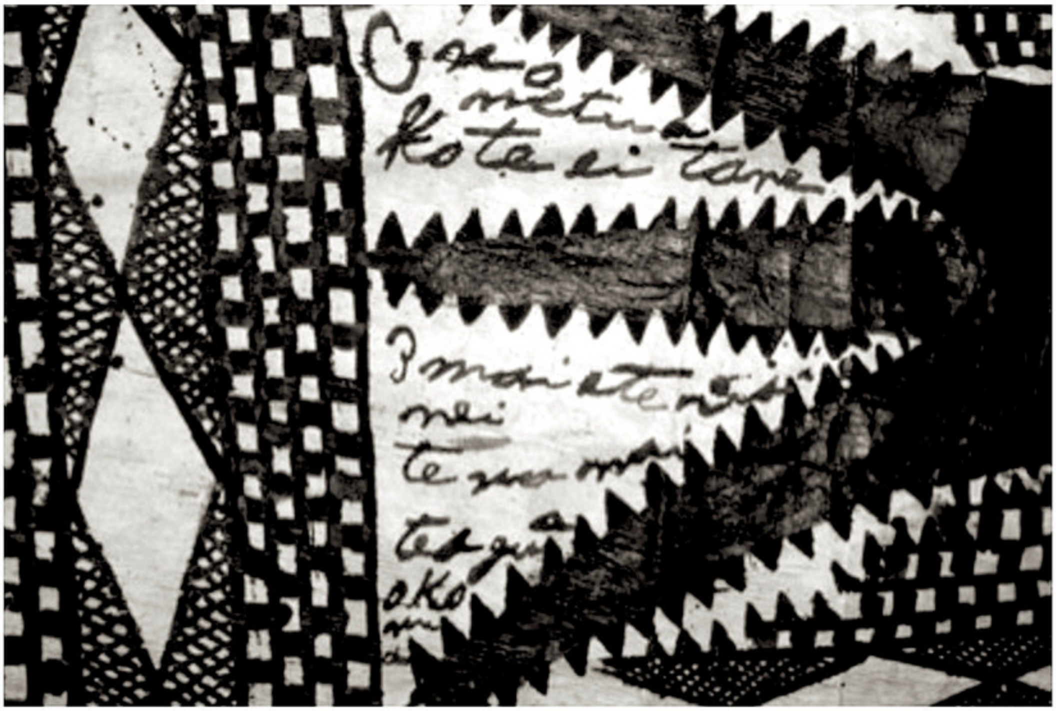


*Figure 18 - Top and middle panel on EBC42953, Ethnobotany Collection, Kew Gardens, London*

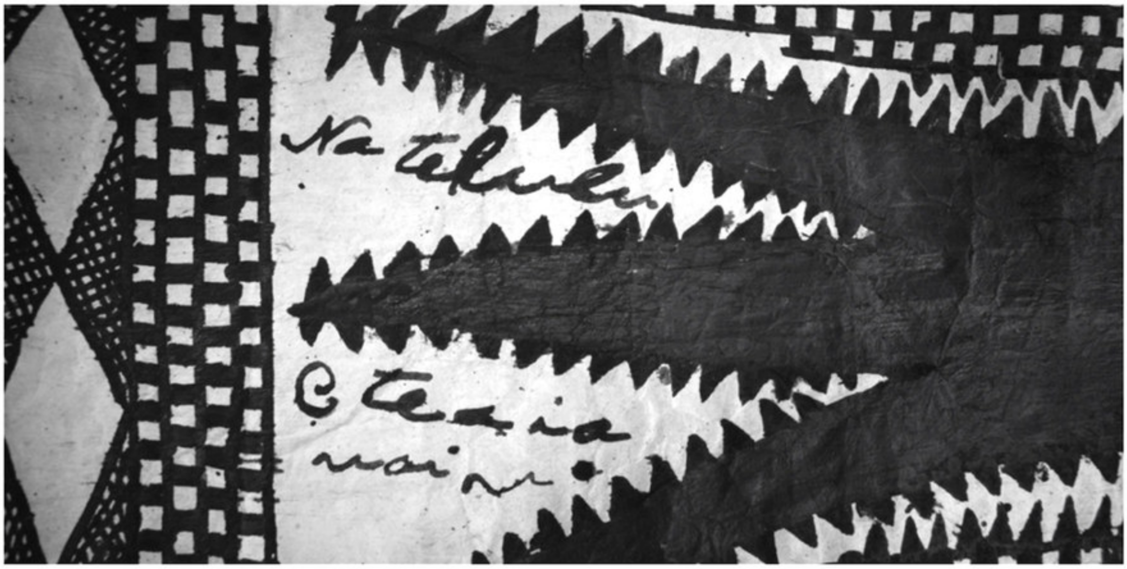


*Figure 19 - Bottom panel on EBC42953, Ethnobotany Collection, Kew Gardens, London*

group of female congregation members. The name of the person donating the gift is publicly acknowledged. Since the mid 19th century, tivaivai or handmade quilts have replaced bark cloth in this ceremony. Joyce Hammond observed and photographed an 'o'ora ceremony in Rarotonga in 1978 (Fig. 20) –

> In a special farewell ceremony for a minister and his family on the island of Rarotonga, women of the congregation created five tifaifai [tivaivai] to bestow in a special ritual manner to the departing family. The family sat in a place of honor, and the women carried the five unfolded tifaifai forward one at a time, placing each across the laps of the family members. [41]

It is possible that the Kew cloth, at least, was made for the 'o'ora of Te’ei in February 1839. After departing Rarotonga, Te'ei spent the next six years on Maupiti raising the additional question of who subsequently collected the Kew cloth from Te'ei at Maupiti.

## Evidence for Cook Islands attribution

Based on the information presented above, the case for attribution of the ‘centipede cloths’ to Rarotonga includes the following –

> “the similarity of the border of [the Kew] cloth to the black-and-white chequer-board of the roll of barkcloth on the large [British Museum] Rarotongan staff god” (Kooijman, 1972; 59, Hooper, 2006; 224);
>
> similarities between the serrated black and white lines on the border of the British Museum, Exeter and Yale Peabody cloths and the serrated white and black lines on the cloth of a feathered headdress attributed by Buck to Rarotonga (Fig. 13) and on the Hunterian maro or loin cloth (Fig. 12) again attributed to Rarotonga;
>
> similarities between the rori or sea cucumber motifs in the Hooper, British Museum, Kew, Exeter, and Yale Peabody cloths and other 19th century ‘Rarotongan’ cloths, notably the

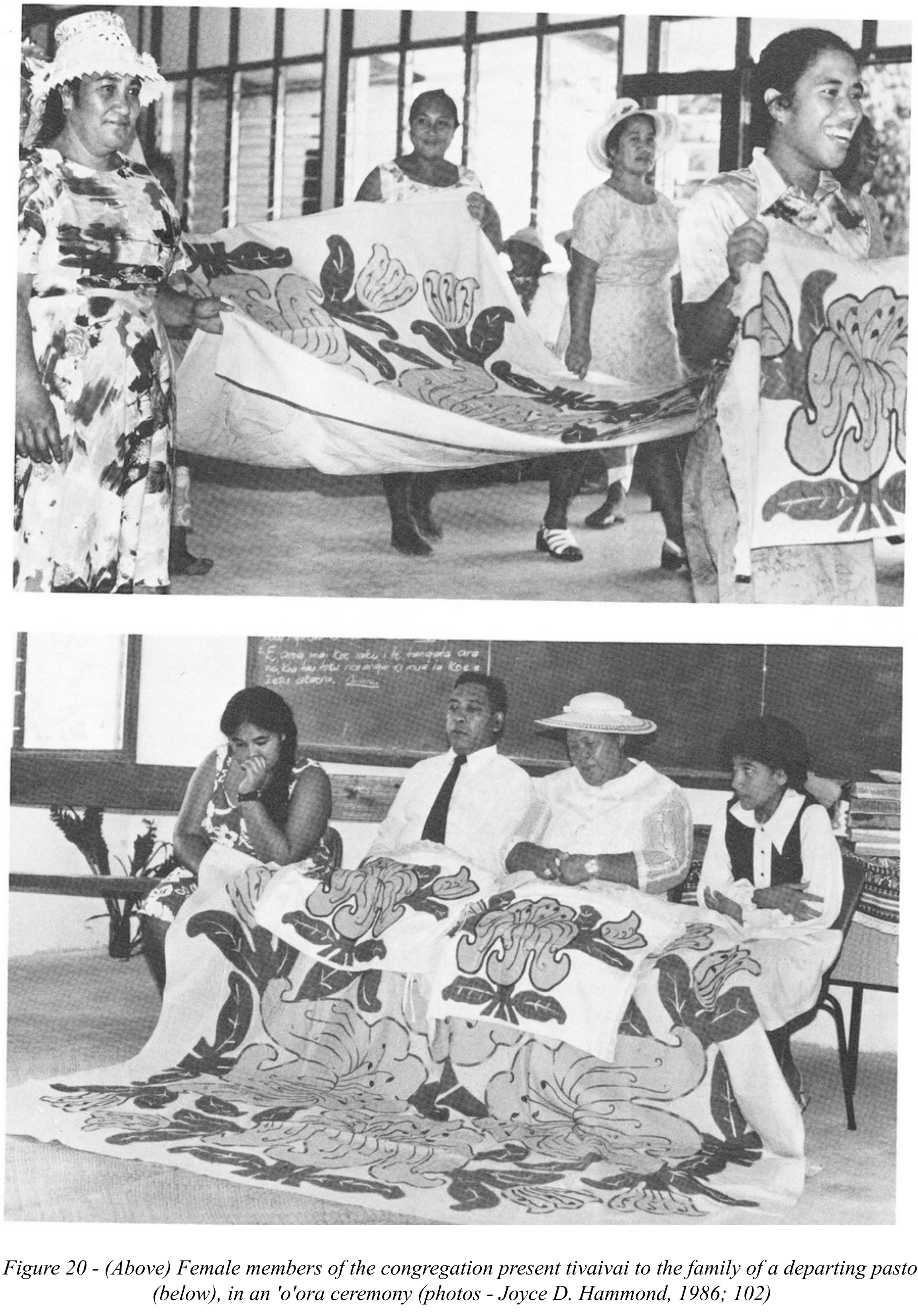

E, ama mai Koe iaku i te tangata ara

*Figure 20 - (Above) Female members of the congregation present tivaivai to the family of a departing pastor (below), in an 'o'ora ceremony (photos - Joyce D. Hammond, 1986; 102)*

> British Museum fragments EP.14.a and b (Figures 15 and 9) collected by Hugh Cuming;
>
> similarities between the diamond shapes on the borders of the Kew cloth (Fig.2), the ‘Rarotongan’ cloths EP.14.a and b.(Figs.15 and 9) in the British Museum, collected by Hugh Cuming and the British Museum Rarotongan staff god (Fig.21);
>
> the script on the Kew cloth in the Rarotongan language, indicating, on our reading, that the cloth was presented to Pastor Te'ei from the ruru or bale of cloth of the wife of Teaia mataiapo of Ngatangi'ia, Rarotonga;
>
> the centipede motif, which is closely associated with Pa ariki, the descendant of Iro-tua-veri (Iro of the centipede back) and paramount chief of the mata'iapo Teaia of Ngatangi'ia.

## Problems with Cook Islands attribution

Identification of the ‘centipede cloths’ as Rarotongan is, in part, based on their stylistic similarity to a number of cloths that feature a brick pattern border, and/or infill with a rori motif. Many of these comparator cloths were collected in the early 19th century by the “prince of collectors” Hugh Cuming. [42] Yet Cuming’s unpublished *Journal of a Voyage from Valparaiso to the Society and the Adjacent Islands ... in the years 1827 and 1828* (Mitchell Library, Sydney) makes no mention of Cuming having visited Rarotonga.

He was, however, at Ra'iātea on 23 April 1828. [43] There, as at other islands, he acquired a large collection of shells and “natural objects” and befriended important figures, including the ariki Tamatoa, “King of Ulitea” [Ra'iātea]. Tamatoa told Cuming, “He would order all his subjects to bring what shells they had and could collect and also what remains they had of their former War Implements and Dresses to the house in which I reside to purchase if it met my approbation.” [44]

At Ra'iātea, Cuming also met Rev. John Williams [45] freshly arrived from Rarotonga “having the King [Makea] of Rarotonga with us, having two immense idols with us.” [46] These “two immense idols” were in addition to other Rarotongan ‘idols’ previously brought to Ra'iātea in 1825. [47]

One of these “two immense idols” was subsequently shipped to London [48] for the Missionary Society Museum (now in the British Museum). As noted, the brick pattern designs on the wrapped tapa of this god figure provides strong evidence, cited by Kooijman (1972; 59) and Hooper (2006; 224), for identifying the ‘centipede cloths’ as Rarotongan.

Williams’ instruction to teachers stationed in the Cook Islands in 1823 had been –

> If you obtain Idols burn some (but not the best)… leave the greatest part and send to Raiatea as an encouragement to us and we will send them to England as a rejoicing to them. [49]

This resulted in an extraordinary number of god figures and discarded cloth wrappings in Williams’ possession at Ra'iātea. On Rarotonga alone, Williams spoke of “a house nearly full” of ‘idols’ gathered for him [50] and to this collection at Ra’iātea were added the ‘idols’ of other islands including Ma'uke, Mangaia, [51] Aitutaki, [52] and Rurutu. [53]

Buck speaks of the resulting “accumulation of ‘trophies’ assembled at Raiatea” [54] while, Williams describes those forwarded to London in 1825, “only as the drop of a bucket.” [55] By the time of Cuming's visit in April 1828, the collection included the voluminous cloth wrapping of at least the second of the “immense idols” that remained at Ra'iātea. [56] At least 18 of these large wrapped figures were surrendered to Williams (Fig. 23). [57]

As at Rarotonga [58], the wooden idols were stripped of their cloth. The amount of cloth yielded was significant given that each was “wrapped around with native cloth, until it became two or three yards in circumference.” [59] This cloth was presumably gifted or traded from Williams' station to visiting collectors, such as Cuming, or used in other gift exchanges.

Cuming returned to London in 1831 with a massive collection of “natural objects” including 83,000 shells, later purchased by the British Museum, plant specimens for botanical collections such as Kew, bird collections, barnacle specimens studied by Darwin and ethnographic objects including weapons, “dresses”, and cloths collected at Ra’iātea and elsewhere.

One of the most striking of Cuming's cloths is EP.14 (comprising EP.14 a. and b. – Figs. 15 and 9) in the British Museum which incorporate the brick pattern, diamond, and triangle borders seen on the ‘centipede cloths’ and on the tapa wrapping of the British Museum’s Rarotongan staff god (Oc1978,Q.845.a). EP.14 is still more remarkable for featuring the distinctive rori pattern also found on the ‘centipede cloths’. An early label identifies the fragment EP.14.b. as “Rarotonga, H. Cuming, 60.” This provides another important link of the ‘centipede cloths’ to Rarotonga.

The possibility, however, remains that the Cuming’s cloths were collected at one of the other islands visited on his voyage. This would deflect the attribution of the ‘centipede cloths’ away from Rarotonga towards, in particular, islands also visited by either Wilkes (the Smithsonian cloth) or Cook (the Exteter cloth).

The Smithsonian cloth is also problematic for Rarotongan attribution of the ‘centipede cloths.’ Acquired in 1858, it is said to have been “collected [by the] US Exploring Expedition 1838 - 42.” The Expedition did not visit the southern Cook Islands and the nearest they came to the modern Cook Islands was Isles Maria in the Austral group. Though they visited Penrhyn Island, in the non tapa producing northern Cook Islands, they did not go ashore, instead bartering with the people who came out to them in canoes. Despite this, a number of southern Cook Islands items in the Smithsonian are attributed to the Expedition, including several ceremonial Mangaian adzes (USNM Number E3719-0; E3720-0; E3722-0; E3723-0). These items have either been incorrectly attributed to the Wilkes Expedition or obtained by Wilkes elsewhere.

If the Smithsonian cloth is, in fact, Rarotongan, the question arises as to how it might have reached Sāmoa. One possibility is that it formed part of a presentation bundle brought by either

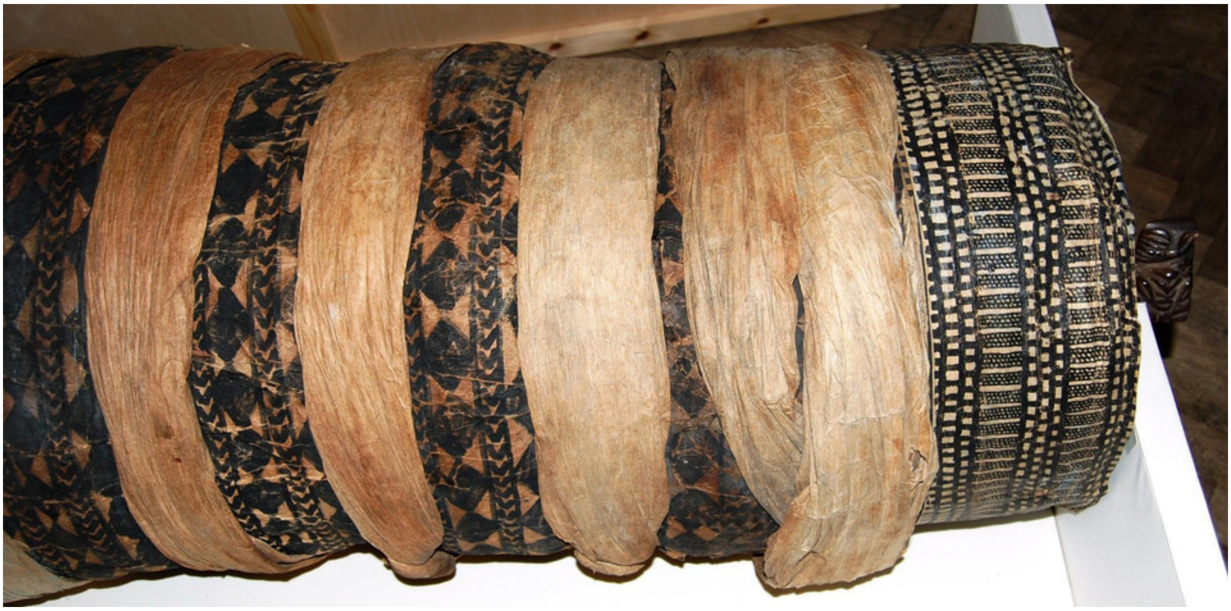


*Figure 21 - Oc1978,Q.845.a Staff God, Rarotonga, acquired from London Missionary Society, © The Trustees of the British Museum*

Williams from his Ra'iātea warehouse or by Makea ariki directly from Rarotonga on their visits to Sāmoa and Tonga. It is known that Commodore Wilkes of the U.S. Exploring Expedition met with Williams in Sāmoa on numerous occasions including at Williams' home at Fasetootai, Apia, in October 1839 [60], and at a fono in Upolu that month, at which Williams' son was appointed by Wilkes as U.S. consul to Sāmoa. [61]

Another possibility is that the cloth arrived in Sāmoa in the possession of Rarotongan evangelists, such as Anania and his wife who were at Manu'a from 1839 or Matatia (from Ngatangi'ia) who, with his wife, was at Savai'i from 1839. Horatio Hale notes in the Expedition's volume on *Ethnography and Philology* that one of his informants was "a very intelligent native of that island [Rarotonga] whom I met at Upolu, whither he had accompanied the missionaries as an assistant." [62] Writing of Williams and the Rarotongans who had "led the way" in Sāmoa, Wilkes acknowledged "the obligation under which I feel myself to the missionaries, both individually and collectively, for their kindness and attention. They did all in their power to further the objects of the Expedition, and to them the squadron is mainly indebted for a great part of the facilities we enjoyed of becoming acquainted with the manners, habits, and customs of the Samoans." [63]

Williams, when he travelled around the southern Cook Islands, the Society Islands, Sāmoa, and Tonga with various Cook Islands chiefs, carried bundles of cloth as gifts, and acquired bundles of cloth, food, etc., in return. In *Missionary Enterprises,* he notes of his visit with Makea Ariki to Aitutaki – "Makea and those who accompanied him obtained a considerable quantity of native cloth and mats, which are highly esteemed, and of considerable value at Rarotonga." [64] And

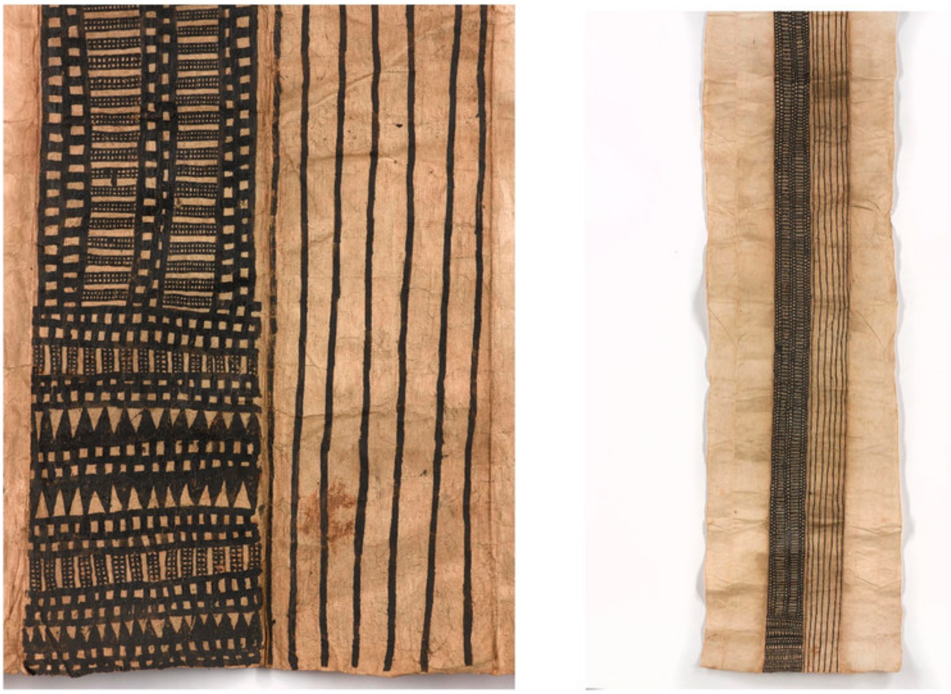
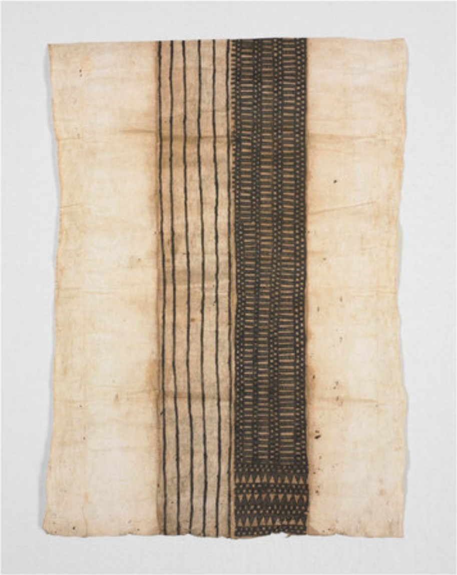
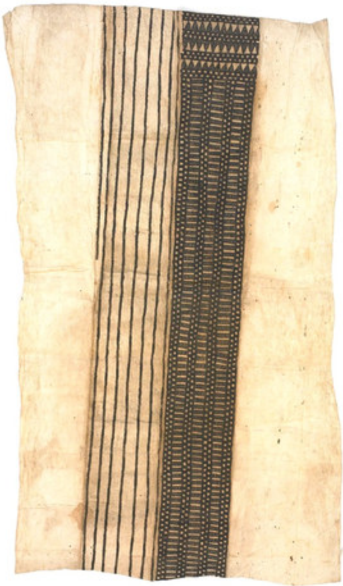


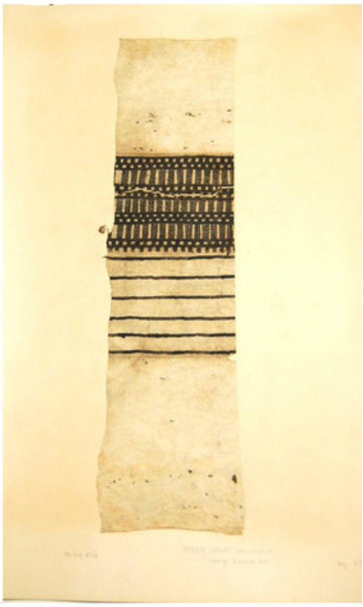
*Figure 22 - Cloths collected by Hugh Cuming (above) in the National Museums of Scotland and (below) in the British Museum – all displaying the familiar brick or chequer-board pattern of the British Museum Rarotongan staff god.*



Oc1981,Q.1427 British Museum Label [?] Information recorded in Q register: 72 Rarotonga, H. Cuming



Oc,EP.9.a, British Museum, Rarotonga, H. Cuming



Oc,EP.9.b, British Museum, Rarotonga, H.Cuming

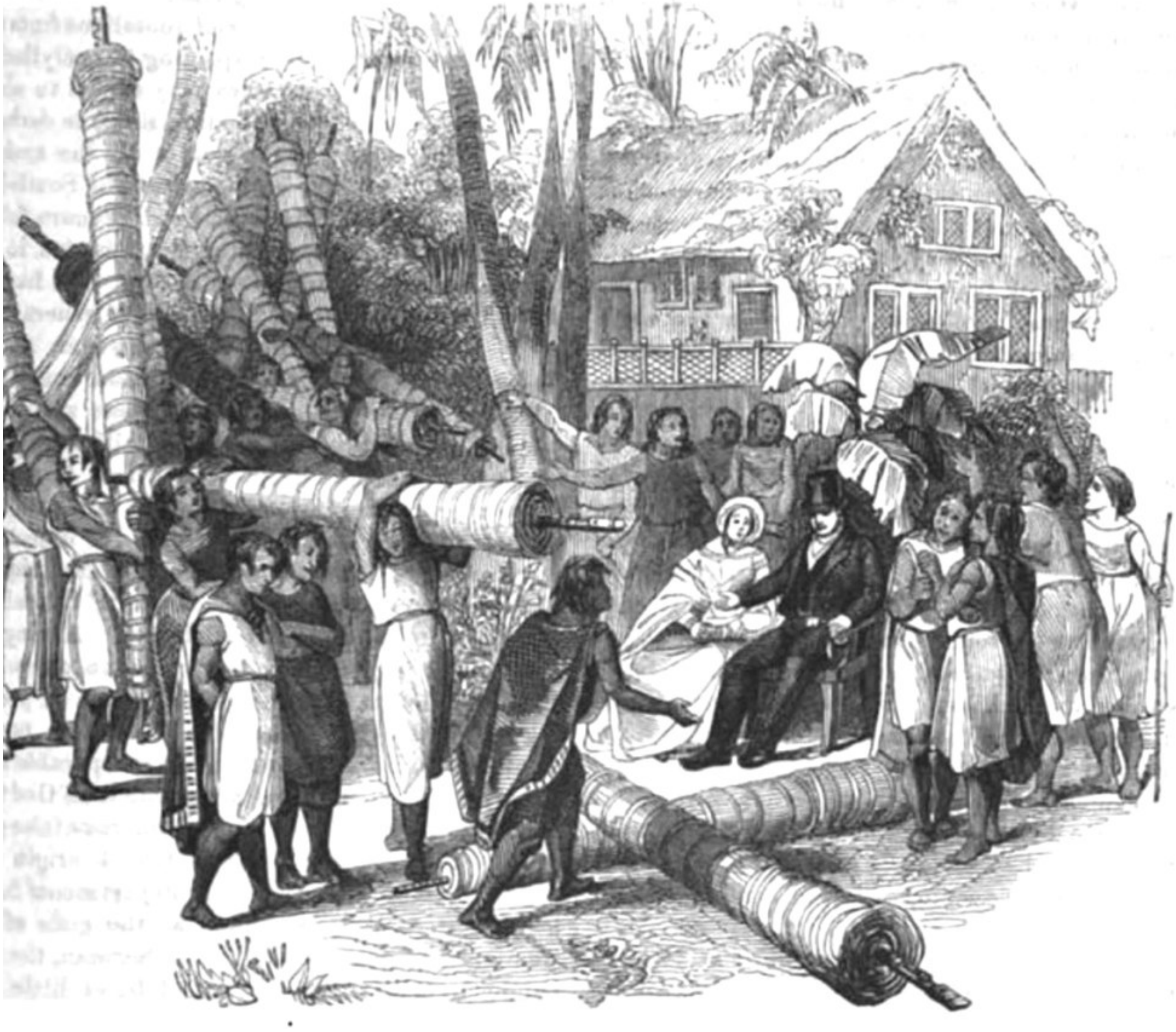


*Figure 23 - "Natives from Rarotonga surrendering 14 of their 'National Idols'" 1827, to Rev. and Mrs. Williams and Rev. and Mrs. Pitman (from: Journal of Civilization, October 9, 1841: 369). Each 'idol' was "wrapped round with native cloth until it became two or three yards in circumference" (Williams, 1838; 117).*

returning from Sāmoa, Williams notes that Makea carried gifted bark cloths, presumably reciprocation for gifts of cloth and other items taken to Sāmoa. [65]

Williams himself preferred to gift European goods such as “sky blue beads”, hatchets, chisels, knives and scissors, “showy print” cloth, and “shawls and scarfs, showy.” [66] Yet, in anticipation of the first missionary visit to the Marquesas, he wrote, “I shall set my people [at Ra’iātea] to work immediately in preparing Matts, Cloth, bonnets, etc etc. for the expedition.” [67]

At the same time, in the late 1820s, the circulation of cloth, mats etc., was gathering pace and distance as an indirect result of the thriving shipbuilding business at Ra'iātea, the latter having formerly been a major centre for the construction of pahi or ocean-going canoes. [68]

Experience of European ships had, according to Marjorie Crocombe and Harry Maude, “set new levels of aspiration for status-conscious chiefs as well as for indigenous craftsmen … The canoe-makers craft was adapted to the new art of ship-building.” [69] As a consequence, “The king’s quay,” at Ra'iātea wrote Williams, “is like a little dock yard.” [70] Ra'iātea alone “acquired its own fleet of seven sloops and schooners.” [71]

Visiting Taha’a and Ra'iātea in 1828, Hugh Cuming wrote, “All the chiefs and several others has each a vessel from thirty to seventy tons modeled and built by the natives of this Isle … at present they only make use of them to visit their Relations and Friends in the Various Islands around them.” [72] These vessels superceded the pahi which had previously sustained trade and exchange throughout the Society and Austral Islands. [73] At the same time, the spread of Christianity had increased the number of peaceful and visitable destinations.

Both social voyages (tere) and Williams’ missionary voyages contributed to the inter-island movement of cloth and similar items of prestige. [74] A possible consequence is that some of the cloths in the accumulations or ruru of elite families with whom European visitors and collectors interacted – between the 1820s when the surge in shipbuilding commenced and the 1850s when cotton cloth had largely replaced tapa – may have been cloth-in-circulation rather than cloth native to its place of collection.

A final problem with attribution of the ‘centipede cloths’ to Rarotonga is the presence of the brick pattern and serrated white and black lines on, for example, a cloth from Fiji (E3274, Smithsonian Institution) collected by the Wilkes Expedition [75] indicating that these motifs are not exclusive to the Cook Islands..

## Other matters

The close resemblance of the Cuming cloths to cloths in the collections of the Museum fur Volkerkunde, now the Weltmuseum Wien, (World Museum Vienna) (Fig. 25) and the Bishop Museum, Honolulu (Fig. 26) casts doubt on previous attributions of these cloths to the Cook

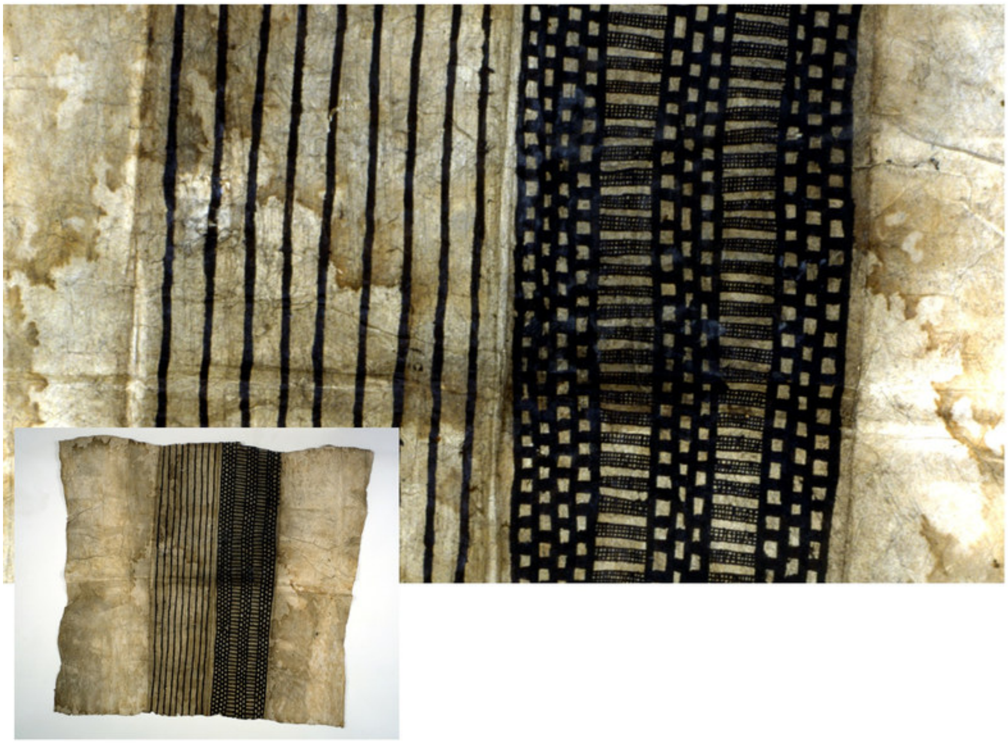


*Figure 24 – Cloth from the London Missionary Society Collection, now in the Fuller Collection, Field Museum, Chicago*

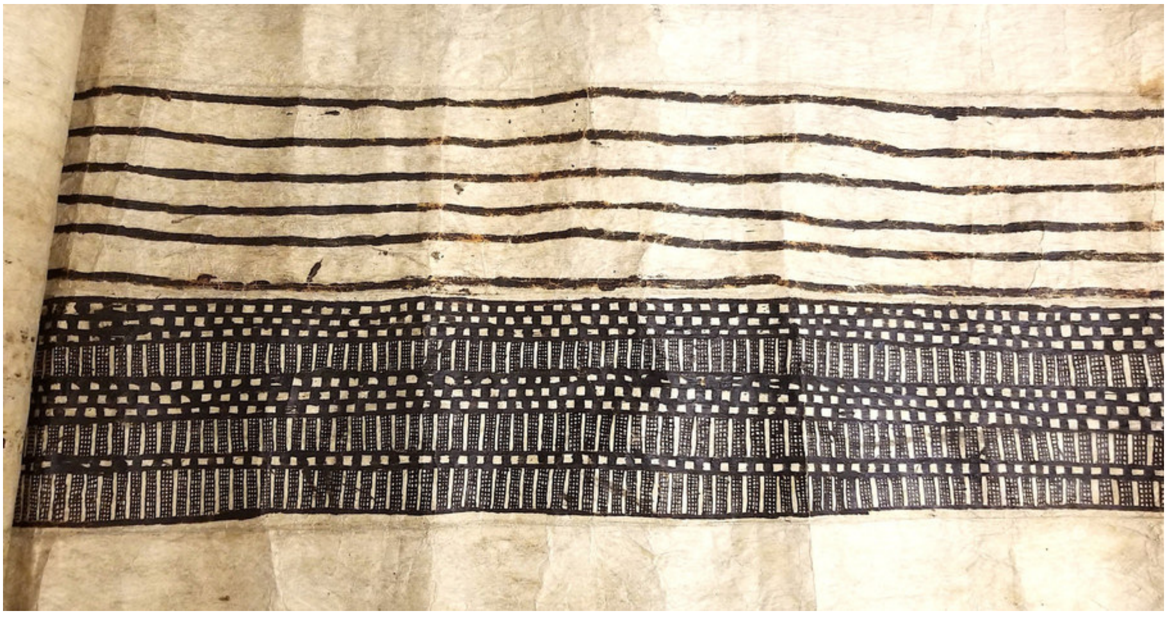


*Figure 25 - Inv. No. 4675, Weltmuseum Wien) Vienna – brick or chequerboard pattern with cross hatched bars and six parallels lines, with strong similarities to both the British Museum Rarotongan staff god (Figure 22) and British Museum fragments Oc,1981, Q.1427, Oc,EP.9.a and Oc,EP.9.b acquired by Hugh Cuming (photo courtesy of Reinhard Blumauer)*

voyages. The Curator, Oceania and Australia at the Weltmuseum Wien, Reinhard Blumauer, advises that –

> the cloth Inv. No. 4675 came into the collection together with a few other objects in 1868 found in the attic of the Belvedere Palace. At that time, exhibitions were always held in this palace, possibly including the Cook collection. Therefore, it was reasonable to assume that it could be related to the Cooks voyages. However, they do not appear in the lists of the Cook collection acquired by the Imperial House in 1806 … Because of the unclear origin, the cloth was initially inventoried only as "Polynesian". In 1970 it was estimated as coming from the Cook Islands. This has not changed so far. [76]

It was this cloth, and the cloth in the Bishop Museum, Honolulu (which Brigham suggests was collected by Cook at Kauai ('Atooi') in 1778 – Fig. 26), that Kaeppler cited as evidence to refute Kooijman's attribution of the Exeter cloth to Rarotonga. The similarity of the two cloths to those collected by Cuming (in the British Museum and the Hunterian), as well as the cloth in the Field Museum, Chicago (Fig. 24) may point to a common origin in the second or more of the "immense idols" taken from Rarotonga to Ra'iātea.

The parallel lines on these cloths appear to be guidelines for the infill pattern on the edge of the cloth. (The staff gods were wrapped with successive layers extending along the wooden staff, accounting for its increasing bulk towards the top. The part of the cloth left blank below the infill pattern allows for overlap by the next layer of cloth). These guidelines vary in number between six and eleven – in the case of the British Museum cloth (Oc, E P 9a – Fig. 22) the eighth guideline has been discontinued part-way. The infill pattern, viewed across the cloths, shows evidence of different artists at work on what is, after all, a large cloth – the Vienna fragment alone is 3 metres wide. This infill pattern varies from 4 rows of bricks, then 3 rows, and 3 rows on the Field Museum cloth, to 2, 1, 2, 2 in the British Museum cloth (Oc, 1981, Q.1427), to 2, 2, 2, 2 in the British Museum cloth (Oc, E. P. 9a); to 3, 3, 1 in the Vienna cloth, and 2, 2, 2 in the Bishop Museum and National Museums of Scotland cloths. This accords with the view that the cloth and its design were executed by a group of women, and not a single artist.

## Summary

The six pictured 'centipede' bark cloths manifest a broadly uniform artistic style with minor variations in border and background design.

Steven Hooper has suggested –

> because of their similarity, except length, they are probably from one place and even a specialist group of ladies. The fact that so few exist might indicate that they are from a place that was little visited by Europeans until the 1820s, and missionary activity which introduced script, and then ceased to be made because of missionary prohibitions – which would favour a Cook Islands origin – though maybe not Rarotonga. [77]

The inscription in Rarotongan on the Kew cloth suggests that the cloth was produced prior to, or for the occasion of, the 'o'ora of Te'ei orometua in February 1839 on his departure from Rarotonga for Maupiti. On the one hand, if Hooper is correct in suggesting (a) that the script is "in the same dye as the designs and which must therefore be contemporary with them" and (b) that the stylistic similarity of the cloths suggests "one place and even a specialist group" of makers then all six cloths may share a common origin in Rarotonga c.1839. On the other hand, the dating of the Hooper cloth to 1833 suggests that the design motifs were perhaps part of a tradition rather than a one-off contemporaneous production.

Other than the inscription on the Kew cloth, perhaps the most convincing evidence for a Rarotongan origin for the 'centipede cloths' is the cloth EP.14 (a. and b.) in the British Museum (Figs. 15 and 9) collected by Hugh Cuming, probably at Ra'iātea in 1828, identified as Rarotongan, featuring the same rori background and the same diamond, triangle and brick border motifs found in variations on the 'centipede cloths'.

While Hugh Cuming did not visit Rarotonga, he was present at Ra'iātea immediately after the arrival from Rarotonga of Rev. John Williams and Makea ariki, accompanied by two "immense idols," of which only one has survived intact. The large number of cloths collected by Cuming, attributed to Rarotonga, suggests that he may have been the beneficiary of the unwrapping of the second large Rarotongan staff god and other god figures, warehoused at Ra'iātea.

The Vienna (Fig. 25) and Bishop Museum (Fig. 26) cloths, previously said to have been collected during the Cook voyages and cited by Kaeppler as casting doubt on Kooijman's attribution of the Exeter cloth to Rarotonga, have such a strong similarity to the cloths collected by Cuming (in the British Museum and the Hunterian - Fig. 22), and the LMS cloth in the Field Museum, Chicago (Fig. 24), as to suggest a common origin in this second "immense idol" taken from Rarotonga to Ra'iātea in March 1828.

Finally, the Smithsonian cloth, assuming it is Rarotongan and correctly identified as collected by the U.S. Exploring Expedition in Sāmoa, may have its origin in the interactions between Wilkes, Hale and other members of the Expedition and Rev. John Williams and his group of Rarotongan evangelists resident in Sāmoa during the Expedition's visit.

The increased movement, post 1820, of missionaries and Polynesian evangelists, as well as travelling/tere parties aboard chiefly-owned schooners, adds to the challenge of attribution of cloth and other gifted or exchanged items, with the result that many objects collected at (and attributed to) specific locations may be objects-in-circulation rather than native to their place of collection.

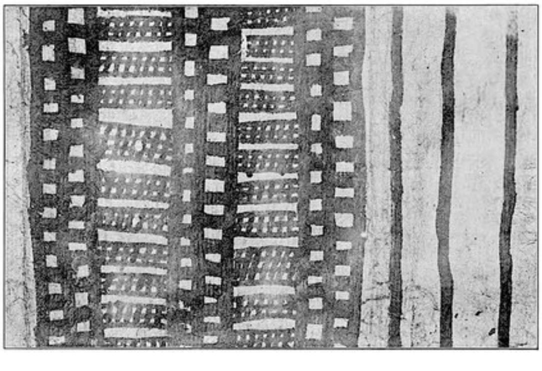


*Figure 26 - Brigham suggests this cloth, with the familiar 'Rarotongan' design, was collected by Cook at Kauai ('Atooi') in 1778 – William T. Brigham, 1911, Ka Hana Kapa The Making of Bark-Cloth In Hawaii, Bishop Museum Press, Honolulu, p.42*

## Glossary

| | |
|---|---|
| akamarokura’anga | the ceremony of wrapping in the red maro of chieftainship |
| akararangi’anga | the ceremony of making heavenly, or sacred |
| akatao’anga | placing the burden of office |
| ariki | chief |
| ‘aute | paper mulberry (*Broussonetia papyrifera*) |
| fono (Samoan) | council |
| makatea | raised terraces of upraised fossilised or dead coral |
| marae | sacred space reserved for religious and social ceremonies |
| maro | waist girdle |
| mata'iapo | head of a sub-tribe |
| ‘o’ora | public presentiation of mats, tivaivai, baskets etc., at public ceremonies |
| pahi (Tahitian) | traditional large double-hulled vessel of Tahiti |
| pure | prayer |
| re’u | soot from burnt kernels of the candlenut fruit |
| rori | sea cucumber, beche-de-mer |
| rori ngata kerekere | Black Melting Sea Cucumber *(Stichopus black)* |
| ruru | bale or bundle, usually of cloth |
| ruru vehe (Tahitian) | tapa rolled into a bundle and wrapped in matting |
| sisi fale (Tongan) | coconut fibre waist garment |
| tapa | cloth made from bark of paper mulberry, breadfruit, banyan, etc |
| taura | link to the spiritual world, often a 'totemic' animal or insect |
| tere | travel, visit |
| tikoru | white tapa, made especially for priests or to decorate god figures |
| tiputa | a poncho-like garment of tapa cloth |
| tivaivai | patchwork or appliquéd quilt |
| umete | wooden bowl or trough, also kumete |
| veri tara | large brown centipede *(Scolopendra subspinipes)* |

## Footnotes

[1] Email from Marjorie Crocombe to Karen Jacobs, 5 September 2005.

[2] *Oceanic Art from the James Hooper Collection*, Christie’s, London, 17 June 1980. Description of Lot 109.

[3] Dr Steven Hooper, pers. com., 2 June 2023.

[4] Dr Samuel Johnson’s *A Dictionary of the English Language*, Strahan, London, 1775 includes under ‘dress’, ‘Splendid cloaths; habit of ceremony.’

[5] Dr Steven Hooper, pers. com., 2 June 2023.

[6] Kaeppler, 1978; 160.

[7] *Oceanic Art from the James Hooper Collection*, Christie’s, London, 17 June 1980. Description of Lot 109.

[8] This church also had close associations with Henry Nott and George Pritchard, colleagues of Williams in the Tahitian mission.

[9] Prout, 1843; 410 - 411.

[10] Rev. Timothy East’s sermon at the Tabernacle, Moorfields gave Williams his “first religious

impressions" and led to his missionary life (Prout, 1843; 411). East was the author of *The Modern Martyr* and he and Williams and their families, remained close personal friends until Williams' death in 1839.

[11] Rev. John Williams, 30 May 1828, SOAS, SSL, Box 6, Folder 6, Jacket A.

[12] *The Directory of Birmingham including an Alphabetical List of the Inhabitants of the Town*, Wrightson and Webb, Birmingham, 1835.

[13] Williams retained his own personal ethnographic collection, including South Seas 'idols'. During his stay in England from 1834 - 1838 he used these to entertain guests at his home in Bedford Square, London. On occasions items from the collection would be gifted to his guests, as this extract from his biography indicates – "Very frequently on these occasions, the curiosities which he had brought from the islands were drawn from their hiding places, and the various contents of several cases covered the table or the floor. A singular medley of idols, dresses, ornaments, domestic utensils, implements of industry, and weapons of war, formed so many subjects of remark; and not unfrequently, Mr. Williams arrayed his own portly person in the native tiputa and mat, fixed a spear by his side, and adorned his head with the towering cap of many colours, worn on high days by the chiefs … To this exhibition, he would add explanations of each relic; naming and sometimes describing the island from which he obtained it; the past history and present state of its inhabitants; the use of the object, or the customs connected with it; and various other interesting particulars. In general, these interesting statements were crowned by a donation of some curiosity which had awakened special interest..." (Prout, 1843; 479 - 80).

[14] 'Tikoru' is a thick white cloth, made by men, specifically to wrap the gods (Buck, 1944; 73).

[15] *Situating Pacific Barkcloth in Time and Place,* https://tapa.gla.ac.uk/objects/

[16] https://ecbot.science.kew.org/read_ecbot.php?catno=42953&search_term=42953&search_type=name

[17] https://www.si.edu/object/bark-cloth:nmnhanthropology_8402463

[18] https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/E_Oc1910-257

[19] Dr. Chris Wingfield, Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, pers. com., 29 March 2023.

[20] Dr. Andy Mills, pers. com., 20 March 2023. The candlenut sap-soot paint is made by mixing iri (red sap expressed from the bark of old or mature candlenut trees) with re'u (soot) obtained from burnt kernels of the candlenut fruit.

[21] Tony Eccles, 2015, "Discovering Worlds: transforming the Pacific displays at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum", *Oceanic Art Society Journal* - Vol. 20, Issue 1, February 2015 reprinted from https://rammcollections.org.uk/2015/04/08/new-project-called-discovering-worlds/

[22] Kaeppler, 1978; 160, see also Pole and Doyal, 2004.

[23] Kaeppler, 2011; 93.

[24] https://collections.peabody.yale.edu/search/Record/YPM-ANT-014292

[25] Roger Colton, Senior Collections Manager Anthropology, Peabody Yale Museum pers.com., December 2017.

[26] *"More Joy for Christians… the complete overthrow of idolatry in the island of Aitutaki written by Mr. Williams from the mouth of Papeiha one of the Native Teachers sent to that Island by the Church of Christ at Raiatea",* SOAS, South Seas Journals, Box 4 Folder 59.

[27] The *Stichopus black* or Black Melting sea cucumber common on Rarotonga – in particular

the Muri lagoon in Takitumu – and the makatea (elevated reef) islands of the southern Cooks (*Cook Islands Biodiversity Database).* These motifs were identified as sea cucumber by local Rarotongan artist Michael Tavioni (pers. comm., 2022) and as a “design of sea slug” by Roger Duff and Stuart Park in the catalogue for *The Art of Oceania,* UNESCO Travelling Exhibition, 1975, Panel 30.

[28] Kooijman (1972; 60) refers to “a tapa fragment originating from Rarotonga … (E.P.9.66)” decorated with the same patterned border of “diamonds, triangles and small rectangular figures” as the British Museum’s EP. 14. Julie Adams of the British Museum (pers.com., 8 June 2023) reports that the British Museum’s database has no record of E.P. 96 and suggests Kooijman may have meant E.P.9.b. one of the fragments of barkcloth collected by Hugh Cuming (see discussion below).

[29] “Ko To Rarotonga Are-Korero Teia No Iro-Nui-Ma-Oata” [The Are Korero of Rarotonga’s story of Iro-Nui-Ma-Oata] na Tivini Haweti [Stephen Savage] ma Tamuera More-Taunga-o-te-tini, koia a Tamuera Te Rei, in *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, Vol. 26, No. 1, 1917, p. 17.

[30] This museum houses the collection of father and son collectors Richard and Henry Syer Cuming with no known connection to Hugh Cuming.

[31] http://heritage.southwark.gov.uk/objects/6908/girdle?ctx=086dc715-f250-437a-99fb-5b01f728804e&idx=0

[32] We suggest this cloth may, in fact, not be a maro but a fragment of the wrapping of a large Rarotongan staff god (see discussion below).

[33] Buck, 1944; 101-2.

[34] Kooijman, 1972; 59. Steven Hooper, 2006; 224.

[35] Gill, 1856; 51.

[36] Williams, 1838; 122.

[37] “Words on tapa foil researchers” in *Cook Islands News*, 5 April 2018.

[38] Rev. John Williams notes – “Three teachers from the church at Borabora – Oupa, Tehei and Tutu – were landed at Atiu in late 1823 or early 1824.” Moyle, 1984; p.33, fn., 23.

[39] Gunson, 1978; 362. During a visit to Atiu by Rev. Aaron Buzacott in 1835, Te'ei was found wanting in the knowledge and practice of Christianity and was replaced in 1836 by Papeiha, minister at Arorangi, Rarotonga. Te'ei was in turn relocated to Arorangi, under the guidance and instruction of Rev. Buzacott. Te'ei remained at Arorangi from 1836 – 1838 when he was replaced by Rev. William Gill. Te'ei, his wife and seven children were then relocated to Maupiti by Rev. John Williams on the mission ship *Camden*, March 1839. (Aaron Buzacott, 8 December 1838, SOAS, SSl, Box 11, Folder 7, Jacket B).

[40] William Ellis, 1829, *Polynesian researches, during a residence of nearly six years in the South Sea Islands*, Fisher, Son, & Jackson, London, Vol. 2, p.174.

[41] Hammond, 1986; 102.

[42] Dance, 1980; 477 - 501.

[43] Cuming was at Ra'iātea on 23 April 1828; sailing from there for Rurutu on 1 May 1828; for Ra'ivāvae on 5 May (where he could not land); for Tubua'i on 7 May; and for Rapa-iti from 13 May, departing on 17 May 1828 and returning thence to Pitcairn, and finally Valparaiso.

[44] Hugh Cuming, n.d.; 99.

[45] Hugh Cuming, n.d.; 101-103.

[46] Williams, SOAS, SSL Ra'iātea, 20 April, 1828. Also Rev. Charles Barff’s letter of 27 May 1828 notes – “Mr. Williams … arrived …[with] Makea King of Rorotoa & two more idols from

that island.” (Barff, SSL, 27 May, 1828).

[47] Prout, 1843; 219 quotes Williams in a letter to Rev. Matthew Wilkes dated 29 January 1825, “The messengers [from Rarotonga] brought with them a few idols; but they say a house nearly full is waiting my arrival.” Later that year he wrote from Ra'iātea, “We have sent you home some Idols all the large Idols are still at Rarotonga I should like to send home a pair the freight would be very great we must endeavour to get a pair up to Raiatea by some means and then perhaps a whaler might give them a passage to England. It appears they are very large I have not seen them [the surrender of the large god staffs wrapped in tapa did not occur until 1827] those that we now send are partly from Rarotonga, a God of the Sea, a preserver of fleets is the shameless being, indeed all their images are grossly indecent The bundle of idols feathers etc are from Maute [Ma'uke]…” (Rev. John Williams, Ra'iātea, 12 November 1825, SOAS, SSL, Box 5, Folder 3, Jacket B).

[48] Williams dispatched one of the ‘immense idols’ on the whaling ship *Sir Andrew Hammond*, Captain Hammer leaving Ra'iātea for London in mid-November, 1830 – “The idols from Rarotonga. Captain Hammer of the Sir Andrew Hammond has kindly taken it. You will perhaps have to pay freight for it. I did not think well to ask him to take it for nothing it being so large – I also have given Captain Hammer permission to open it and shew it to his owner Mr. Mellish if he wishes it, it is wrapped up in a matt & a covering of white cloth when these two coverings are taken off you come to the real idol, which is a large quantity of Cloth wrapped round a long stick which is carved at top and bottom the outer covering being spotted cloth, white & black bound round with white bandages about a foot apart so when you have taken off the Matt & white Cloth covering you cease undoing any further.” (John Williams, Ra'iātea,18 November 1830 SOAS, SSL, Box 7, Folder 7, Jacket C). The *Sir Andrew Hammond* under Captain Hammer sailed from London on 12 December 1828. It was at Ra'iātea in November 1830 and returned to London on 15 March 1831 with the staff god on board.

[49] Rev. John Williams; 6 July 1823, SOAS, SSL, Box 4, Folder 1, Jacket A. An edited version appears in Prout 1843, 172 - 8. In accordance with Williams’ instructions to pastors, Te'ei retained “the best of” the Atiuan idols for trans-shipment to Ra'iātea including their cloth wrappings – “The [Atiuan] chiefs said ‘Here is the cloth of the idols’ and presented it to the teachers.” (“We have got some idols but we had nobody to send them by in the vessel” – letter from “Tehei and the Brethren”, in *The Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle*, 1827, Vol. 5, pp. 310 - 11, Westley and Davies, London). See also letter from Upa in *The Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle*, 1827, Vol. 5, pp. 310, Westley and Davies, London.

[50] Rev. John Williams, 29 January 1825, in Prout 1843; 219.

[51] Gill, 1876; 100 – “Messrs Williams and Pratt made an opportune visit to the island [Mangaia]: and they proceeded to Raiatea laden with these idols which were eventually deposited in the museum of the London Missionary Society.”

[52] Williams, 1838; 85. In July 1823, 25 idols from Aitutaki “with their names and history” were sent to Ra'iātea for forwarding to the Deputation of Tyerman and Bennet while they were at Tahiti. “Six others [also from Aitutaki] were sent to England and many of them are now in the Missionary Museum” (Williams, 1838; 90).

[53] Williams, 1838; 44. The major Rurutu idols had been forwarded to England in 1822 – George Bennet to James Montgomery 12 November 1822, Sheffield City Archives, Australian Joint Copying Project, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-2683367838/view

[54] Buck, 1944; 317.

[55] King, 2011; 66 citing Rev. John Williams, 25 February 1825, SOAS, SSL, Box 7, Folder 5, Jacket C.

[56] David King (2011; 48 fn.143) incorrectly notes that *both* of the large 1828-collected staff gods reached England, "the first one with Capt. Hammer, and the second one with Williams on the whaler *Sir Andrew Hammond,* Captain Couthall, in 1834." Captain Hammer was the master of the *Sir Andrew Hammond* from 1828 to 1831, succeeded by Captain Couthall from 1831 to 1834. It was this vessel that conveyed the Williams family to England, arriving 12 June 1834. According to Williams, "one [staff god] was kept to be sent to England: it is now in the Missionary Museum" (Williams, 1838; 97).

[57] In addition to the 14 surrendered at Avarua, on the occasion of Tinomana's conversion at Arorangi – "Four great idols were then brought and laid at the teachers' feet, who, having read a portion of the tenth chapter of the gospel of St. Luke, which was peculiarly appropriate, especially from the seventeenth to the twentieth verses, disrobed them of the cloth in which they were enveloped, distributed it among the people, and threw the wood to the flames" (Williams, 1838; 178). But, according to Papeiha some of Tinomana's idols were spared from the flames – "In the course of a few days all the idols in the district were brought to the teachers; some of these were destroyed, but the others they determined to send to Raiatea" (Williams, 1838; 152).

[58] As Buck observes of the Rarotongan staff gods, "in most museum specimens the cloth has disappeared" (1944; 317).

[59] Williams, 1838; 97.

[60] Jenkins, 1850; 209 notes that John Williams "fell a victim to the cause in which he was so zealously engaged, [he was killed at Erromanga in the New Hebrides, now Vanuatu] shortly after the squadron sailed from the group…" in November 1839.

[61] Wilkes, 1845, Vol. 2: 97, 109.

[62] Hale, 1846: 136.

[63] Wilkes, 1845, Vol. 2: 97, 136.

[64] John Williams,1838; 153. Nicholas Thomas observes that in Tahiti, "The wealth and status of an elite household was expressed in accumulations of cloths" (Thomas, 1995; 137). These accumulations were augmented and depleted by gifting and exchange.

[65] John Williams, 1838; 451.

[66] John Williams, 20 April 1828, SOAS, SSL, Box 6, Folder 5, Jacket D.

[67] John Williams, 20 April 1828, SOAS, SSL, Box 6, Folder 5, Jacket D.

[68] D'Arcy, 2006; 92.

[69] Maude and Crocombe, 1962; 52.

[70] Prout, 1842; 229.

[71] Chappell, 1997; 12.

[72] Cuming, Journal; 86. See also Bennett, 1840; 132. Bennett was at Ra'iatea in 1834 and found "seven vessels, schooners and sloops. One of these, of 80 tons burden, was armed with six cannon during the late war with Borabora, and succeeded in capturing the enemy's armed vessel of nearly the same size."

[73] D'Arcy, 2006; 53.

[74] An example is the umete (kumete) now in the Edinburgh Museum, presented in 1871 by Parua ariki of Atiu, Cook Islands on a visit to Titaua, a niece of Queen Pomare living in the district of Ha'apiti, Moorea. (Titaua was then married to the Scots trader John Brander and after his death in 1877, was married to George Darsie from Anstruther, Fife. In 1892, the couple retired to Anstruther and in 1895 Darsie sold the bowl to the Edinburgh Museum).

[75] E3274, Fiji barkcloth, US Exploring Expedition 1838 - 42, Smithsonian Institution, Smithsonian accession date 1858.
[76] Reinhard Blumauer, Curator, Oceania and Australia, Weltmuseum Wien, Vienna, pers. com., 30 June 2023.
[77] Steven Hooper, pers. com., 6 December 2017. In the Cook Islands, tapa continued in production for everyday wear until replaced by printed cotton in the 1830s and 1840s.

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## About the authors

**Rod Dixon** is a former Director of USP Cook Islands (2002 - 2018); Associate Dean and Senior Lecturer, Charles Darwin University (CDU); visitor, North Australian Research Unit, ANU; adjunct, Centre for Indigenous Natural and Cultural Resource Management, CDU; foundation Executive Officer of the Kimberley Land Council; policy official in the Commonwealth public service and Legislative Research Specialist in the Commonwealth Parliament. He first came to the Cook Islands as an Australian volunteer in the Department of Development Planning in 1980.

**Jean Tekura Mason** is Curator and Manager of the Cook Islands Library and Museum and has served as an officer of the Cook Islands Parliament. She is also a cultural writer and a poet. Jean is Ngati Nurau and Ngati Teakatauira of Atiu and Mauke; mixed with Scottish (Ngati Turner Lamont) and English (Ngati Geordie).

*(Left to right) Linda Crowl, Nari and Marjorie Crocombe (standing) Ana Koteka*

# Evangelising Pacific Islanders' creativity, artistry, and authorship: Marjorie Tua‘inekore Tere Crocombe's vision for Oceania

LINDA CROWL

## Education in the Cook Islands

In the late 1940s, Marjorie Crocombe and other Cook Islanders had scholarships to attend schools and teachers college in New Zealand. There, Marjie was disappointed by the dearth of books about her country and other Pacific Islands. In a library course for teacher training, she wrote a paper about how she would rectify the situation (years before she met Ron). When she returned to Rarotonga in the 1950s as a teacher, the Cook Islands Department of Education had decided schools should teach in Māori language for the first years, progressively adding English to instruction in higher years. Implementing the policy involved Marjie and others in writing, translating, and publishing stories and other reading material (Crocombe 1977b:5), e.g., *Tamariki mataora* (Crocombe et al. 1958).

She left Rarotonga again in 1960 to accompany her husband Ron to Canberra, where Ron was working on his PhD at Australian National University. There, his supervisor Harry Maude encouraged her writing and shared research material (Crocombe 1977b:5). Subsequently, Harry and Marjie's article on "Rarotongan Sandalwood" appeared in the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* (Maude and Crocombe 1962). Two years later, the Islands Education Division of the Department of Education of New Zealand published Marjie's book for children, *They Came for Sandalwood* (1964). Arriving on Rarotonga in 1814 to collect sandalwood, Captain Philip Goodenough of the *Cumberland* found none. After misunderstanding, theft, and bloodshed, *Cumberland* departed, subsequently leaving a woman called Tepaeru Ariki at Aitutaki and bearing a cargo of nono (*Morinda citrifolia*) to Sydney, where it did not sell. In 1823, Tepaeru returned to Rarotonga, along with Tahitian pastor Papeiha and missionary John Williams. A relative of a Rarotongan ariki, Tepaeru helped to evangelise the island (Maude and Crocombe 1962, Crocombe 1964). Many books followed as Cook Islanders and missionaries became prolific publishers (Buzacott 1985[1866], Crowl 2007).

In a preface to *Two Hundred Changing Years* (Crocombe 1962, see Powell, this volume) and *They Came for Sandalwood,* F.R.J. Davies wrote,

> Both of these books have been written without thought of any reward for there have been no payments or royalties. She has produced them to help her people retain some of the early history which is in danger of being lost.
>
> Marjorie was one of my earliest scholarship students of whom we were all very proud. Today we are even more proud that she should devote a large part of her leisure to a dedicated purpose in the shape of these books which she has donated quite freely. It is to be hoped that others will prove their sincerity and ability by following her example and helping their people (in Crocombe 1964:iv).

The story of Tepaeru's travels and subsequent evangelisation of Rarotonga has parallels in Marjie's travels and scholarly evangelisation throughout the Pacific Islands. Every Cook Islander student read Marjie's schoolbooks (see Tongia this volume), and many other Pacific schools have used, and many Islander students and adults have read, the books that Marjie and Ron helped to publish.

## Writing in Papua New Guinea

By the time *They Came for Sandalwood* was published, Ron had finished his PhD, and his work had taken the family to live in Papua New Guinea. There, Ron was Executive Officer of the New Guinea Research Unit, and Marjie prepared and presented the weekly 'Malanga Moana' radio programme for the Australian Broadcasting Commission in Port Moresby, while she taught history and pursued her own studies. One would think they had enough on their plates, including raising three children, but they were also translating, annotating, and editing the works of Ta'unga, a Cook Islander pastor who had evangelised in Samoa and New Caledonia's Grande Terre and Loyalty Islands (Crocombe and Crocombe 1968).

Such ethnohistory was not Marjie's sole writing pursuit. She took a university course in creative writing from Ulli Beier, a German who had taught in Nigeria and had successfully published the works of Nigerians. Now, he was teaching creative writing in the English Department at the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG). Publications in English, Motu, Pidgin, and other languages blossomed as short stories, poetry, plays, and cultural and historical studies came from UPNG, training colleges, the Administration College, the Creative Arts Centre, and the Catholic seminary (Crocombe 1977b:6). In the 1990s, Ulli and his wife Georgina Beier came to run a workshop for the Institute of Pacific Studies (IPS) at the University of the South Pacific (USP). I interviewed Ulli about Pacific writing and publishing, and he said Marjie had been one of his best students and continued to be a truly gifted writer, but she saw her duty to encourage other Islanders to write, and that took priority (Crowl field notes). Nevertheless, she would continue to write, e.g., her studies of evangelising pastors: Mangaian Ruatoka in Papua (1982) and Maretu on Rarotonga (1983).

## Encouraging Islanders' expressions

When the University of the South Pacific was founded in 1968, Ron became foundation professor in Pacific Studies, and the family moved to Fiji the following year. Marjie continued her studies, and in 1971, she and Lionel Brown became the first Cook Islanders to graduate from USP. Ron and others were keen to promote the views of Islanders themselves, so they created the South Pacific Social Sciences Association (SPSSA), which began publishing the journal *Pacific Perspective* in 1972. In the first issue, editor Sione K. Tupouniua wrote that the journal would be "a vehicle for ideas, opinions and research findings concerned with economic, social and political affairs in the Pacific Islands" and *Pacific Perspective* would be produced mainly by islanders for islanders (Tupouniua 1972). That first issue included articles from Fijian Rusiate Nayacakalou and Samoan New Zealander Ian Te'o Fairbairn (who had worked at the New Guinea Research Unit with Ron). Book reviews were added by Fijian Savenaca Siwatibau, Tongan Feteleni-Moe-Ata, and Marjie. Over the following decades, SPSSA published 27 issues of *Pacific Perspective* and many books on anthropology, government, history, politics, sociology, and cultural expressions.

While Ron and other social scientists focused on SPSSA and *Pacific Perspective,* Marjie and other creative writers started the South Pacific Creative Arts Society (SPCAS) and *Mana* following the first South Pacific Arts Festival, held in Suva, Fiji in 1972. The festival included dramatic performances, as well as manual arts – carving, weaving, pottery, tapa cloth. Papua New Guinean university students performed a play, and a cross-cultural group of Fiji Islanders created a contemporary re-enactment of an ancient Fijian legend, Rakavono (Crocombe 1973b: 70). Samoan students at USP led by Ata Maʻiaʻi produced Albert Wendt's play "Come the Revolution." Aboriginal Australian Jack Davis, Papua New Guinean students, Fiji Indians, and others read their poetry. It was a beginning, and the shared experience acted as a spur to USP staff and students who thought, surely, a university of a thousand individuals from so many different Pacific Islands cultures could produce more stories, dances, and art. Ata Maʻiaʻi, Jo Nacola, Vanessa Griffen, Raymond Pillai, Howard Van Trease, Satendra Nandan, Neal Engledow, and Marjorie Crocombe met to address the deficit and formed SPCAS. From Samoa, Albert Wendt regularly sent letters encouraging the group's efforts (Crocombe 1977b:6).

Neal Engledow proposed the name *Mana* for the new SPCAS journal. Publishing needs a financial base, and donations came from such members of the community as John Harre, Sione Tupouniua, Brian Lockwood, and Ron Crocombe. Ken Arvidson helped student writers while he was on USP's faculty, and he broadcast their efforts after he moved on and worked elsewhere. Volunteers enabled *Mana* "to launch many of our Pacific writers into the rather difficult world of publishing" (Crocombe 1977b:6). Individuals donated skills in writing, editing, proofreading, and bookselling. Their skills, sometimes amateur to begin with, became honed as more publications appeared and had to be spread across the Pacific. SPCAS members knew to get the job done, they had to do it themselves. Whether undertaken by students or faculty, amateurs or professionals, the work had to be coordinated. Marjie was at the centre of it all as *Mana*'s "indefatigable editor" (Arvidson 1973:7).

SPCAS petitioned Stuart Inder of *Pacific Islands Monthly* (PIM) to publish creative writing in each issue, to which he agreed. At that time, PIM was the only news magazine to report from around the entire region. From 1972, Islanders' creativity reached PIM's 10,000+ readers each month. Marjie wrote, "MANA could not have spread its message so effectively therefore without this initial understanding and acceptance by Stuart Inder, the then editor and now publisher of PIM" (Crocombe 1977b:6). PIM carried as many as eight pages of creative writing each month (Arvidson 1976:45) and ran SPCAS articles for three years and three months, paying SPCAS to do so. Under agreement, SPCAS republished contributions to PIM plus additional short stories in three stand-alone annual volumes called *Mana Annual of Creative Writing* (Crocombe 1973a, 1974a, and 1977a). By then, 263 contributions from 152 writers (many first-time) from all over the Pacific had been published. Requests to reprint articles came from overseas publications; some Pacific countries reprinted writings; and USP began to use some of the works in its courses (Crocombe 1977b:6).

Donations had kickstarted the society's efforts; PIM payments helped to stabilise SPCAS's undertakings; and success garnered more support. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and USP sponsored a Creative Writers Workshop in Suva (Crocombe 1974b&c). Wendt gave royalties from his book *Lali.* Assistance from the Australian government via its South Pacific Cultures Fund allowed SPCAS to pay authors and to start Mana Publications (Crocombe 1977b:6 and see below). Assistance came also from the Nauru Fund through the Australian National University. Raymond Pillai wrote that "it was left to the writers themselves to promote their activities. This was perhaps a good thing in some ways because…the Creative Arts Society has been able to publish a sizable corpus of works…" (1979:2). With PIM's help, *Mana* and SPCAS created regional awareness, but maintaining a publishing market is hard work. For financial reasons, SPCAS decided to switch from producing an annual of creative writing to publishing a journal with wider scope: *Mana Review, A Journal of Language and Literature,* which began in 1976 with Subramani as its first editor (Publishers 1976:v, Crocombe 1977b:6). Editors later dropped *Review*, and later yet, added *Art and Culture* to the title (see Leano and Crowl, this volume).

## Publishing books

Under the moniker Mana Publications, SPCAS had expanded the scope of its activities and began to publish books. Albert Wendt (1974a&b) edited *Some Modern Poetry from Western Samoa* and *Some Modern Poetry from Fiji;* Asesela Ravuvu (1974) edited a volume of Fijian short stories entitled *Tovolea;* and Konai Helu Thaman's (1974) *You, the choice of my parents* and other poems were gathered into a volume. Volunteers assembled the first publications: photocopying and folding pages, adding covers, stapling (Howard Van Trease, pers.com.). Over time, SPCAS was able to pay for professional printing and binding, and more collections and single-author volumes rolled off the presses. Poetry included individual works by Thaman (1981, 1987, 1993, 1999), Sano Malifa of Samoa (1975), Makiuti Tongia of the Cook Islands (1977), Momoe Malietoa Von Reiche of Samoa (1979), Evelyn Patuawa-Nathan of Aotearoa New Zealand (1979), Ruperake Petaia of Samoa (1980), Celestine/Celo Kulaghoe of Solomon Islands (1980, 1991, 1998), Jully Sipolo Makini of Solomon Islands (1981, 1991, 1997), Grace Mera Molisa of Vanuatu (1983), Kauraka Kauraka of the Cook Islands (1985, 1987a, 1992, 1999), Fepa'i F.S. Kolia of Samoa (1988), Sam Ngwele of Vanuatu (1989), Steven Edmund Winduo of Papua New Guinea (1991), Makarita Va'ai of Samoa (1993), Teresia Kieuea Teaiwa of Fiji (1995), and Vaine Rasmussen (1999) and Jean Mason (2001) of the Cook Islands. Collections of poetry included those from Solomon Islands and Vanuatu gathered by Albert Wendt (1975a&b, 1983); from Vanuatu collected by Anne Stamford (1975, 1983); accumulated from across Oceania by Michael Evo et al. (1983) and Marjorie Crocombe et al. (1992); and assembled from Solomon Islands by Julian Maka'a et al. (1996).

After *Tovolea* came more short stories by Raymond Pillai of Fiji (1980), Joseph C. Veramu of Fiji (1981, 1989), and Rexford Orotaloa of Solomon Islands (1989). Novels were written by John Saunana of Solomon Islands (1980), Veramu of Fiji (1994), Sia Figiel of Samoa (1996), and Regis Stella of Papua New Guinea (1999). Drama came from Jo Nacola of Fiji (1976), Vilsoni Tausie Hereniko of Rotuma (1977, 1987, 1989, 1994, 1998), and from Hereniko and Teaiwa (1993, 2001). For children, SPCAS reprinted Marjie's *They Came for Sandalwood* (1978) and published Fiji Islander Vanessa Griffin's storybook (1981). Legends from the Cook Islands were shared by Tangata Simiona (1979), Jon Jonassen (1981), Kauraka Kauraka (1982, 1983), and Vainerere Tangatapoto and Teupokoina Herrmann (1984). Songs from the Cook Islands came from Teupokoina Utanga Morgan (1986) and John Herrmann (1988). Marie Claude Teissier-Landgraf of French Polynesia wrote biographies (1995a, 1995b). SPCAS gave prominence to art and published analyses of Pacific art (e.g., [Hereniko] Tausie 1979).

## Defending South Pacific literature

Although it was not a university program, most SPCAS members were USP faculty, staff, and students. Wendt wrote, “MANA Magazine and MANA Publications, established by the South Pacific Creative Arts Society (owned/operated by some of us), have been a major catalyst in stimulating the growth of this new literature, especially in countries outside Papua New Guinea. Already numerous young poets, prose writers, and playwrights have emerged…” (1976:59). Yet, as with artistic endeavours throughout history and throughout the world, SPCAS and other efforts to initiate and sustain creative writers attracted critics. Alan Barker warned that USP’s efforts to boost creative writing and publishing were counterproductive, nationalist, and racist: producing “programmed literature” and writers without “intrinsic merits” who gain status by adding to a country’s or region’s literature – “one that can be taught at schools and university, pointed at, adduced to, and measured.” This “self-consciousness” is dangerous because “it prevents the emergence of art with true and honest inspiration; for a true culture (and its art works), cannot be ‘produced’. It is a growth, an organic flowering, an apotheosis” (1978:72-73). He maintained that the “conception itself” of creative writing classes and publishing negated creativity (p.72). Perhaps, Barker had not read about the centuries of patronage for creative writing in Europe and elsewhere.

His article provoked rebuttals (in Subramani et al 1978). Helen Tiffin wrote that “literary achievement can be taken as the pulse beat of the re-establishment of the individual’s belief in and understanding of himself, as well as being the primary agent in this process after the trauma of empire and colonialism” (1978:6). Wendt had argued, “Self-expression is a prerequisite of self-respect” (1976:58), and now explained, “A literature is both a mirror and a map of the mind and soul....every culture needs such a map. It is a necessity for the survival of any people. And it has to be their literature” (1978:13-14). Konai Thaman wrote, “Let the people of the Third World decide what they need or value...” (1978:14).

Ten years after USP’s establishment, “the University agreed, albeit reluctantly, that creative writing by staff members should be recognized along with scholarly publications as a positive contribution to the institution” (Pillai 1979:1-2). SPCAS sold its books and journal issues to create funds for future publications. Although the sums were never large, Mana Publications was able to acknowledge actors, artists, dancers, and writers; to co-host writing and art workshops; and to pay typesetting and printing costs. With funds, permissions to reprint, and co-publications, SPCAS assisted other organisations (Crocombe 1980, 1981). Wendt argued that colonialism had brought new symbols, technologies, and values, which Islanders turned to their own forms of expression to lash back at (post-)colonialism and to create national identity (1980). Wendt later claimed, “We have indigenised much that was colonial or foreign to suit ourselves, creating new blends and forms” (1995:3). As Pacific Islanders’ writings began to be published by SPCAS, overseas journals focused on the development of Pacific writing (Crocombe 1981:1), which was the most recent area of the Commonwealth to develop literature in English (Subramani 1992:x). Journalists and essayists had found breaking news, and other peoples began to value this new literature. Over time, Wendt’s and other Islanders’ publications were translated into more languages (e.g., Figiel 1999 and Veramu 2000).

## Institutionalising Pacific studies

In 1976, USP created a new internal organisation, the Institute of Pacific Studies, with Ron as its Director. IPS focused on "Land tenure and rural development, Government and politics, History and biography, Social and cultural studies, Language and communication" (IPS 1980). Over time, a few staff members were added, but the number never reached ten. I was not 'in at the beginning'; I arrived a generation later; however, I was welcomed into the fold – as was anyone who proved they cared for and served the Pacific Islands. Despite its small staff, IPS became one of the most productive publishing houses in the Pacific for several reasons.

First, books had their origins in the classroom, at conferences, festivals, workshops, and other events, and even through casual conversations. Everything – research, teaching notes, student papers, consultancy reports, community activities, artistic musings – had the possibility to be turned into print for the people of the region, not just its academics and officials. For example, for the 1992 Festival of Pacific Arts, the Cook Islands Ministry of Cultural Development, IPS, SPCAS, Cook Islands Studies at University of Victoria Wellington (led by Makiuti Tongia), and the Centre for Pacific Studies at the University of Auckland – which Marjie directed at the time – published *Te Rau Maire* (Crocombe et al 1992). Publication was financially assisted by the New Zealand Representative to the Cook Islands and by Translink Pacific Shipping Ltd.

Second, projects did not wait for full funding to begin. Ron, Marjie, and others started hundreds of projects. When institutions and organisations saw productivity and results, they jumped in with contributions. Resources were cobbled together to create publications. For example, *Land Tenure in Niue* borrowed work, with permission, from Oxford University Press and the Australian National University; benefited from the legal knowledge of the Government of Niue's legal officer Tony Johns; used illustrations from the Government of Niue, Cros Walsh, and Tahafa Talangi; and received financial assistance from New Zealand Catholic Overseas Aid (Kalauni et al 1977:6).

Third, IPS became the institutional home of SPSSA and SPCAS. This was crucial because writing, editing, typesetting, illustrating, and printing books are creative endeavours in their own right, but someone needs to manage the connections and the collectivity. Furthermore, storing, advertising, selling, shipping, and collecting payment are equally necessary enterprises in order to *publish* books. IPS had the physical space to warehouse books and the organisational capacity to generate sales to cover the costs for new publications. SPCAS and SPSSA continued to publish for years – sometimes with their own funding, e.g., *Don't Cry, Mama* (Hereniko 1977) and sometimes by sharing costs with IPS, e.g., *Manakonako – Reflections* (Kauraka 1992). From time to time when SPCAS did not have sufficient funds to publish the work of this or that artist or writer, IPS did so. The following are books of art, creativity, and literature that IPS published:

> *analysis* of literature by Subramani (1985, 1992)
> *art* by Pilioko (1980), a French translation of Hereniko's analysis of Pacific art (1981), interviews with artists (Patricia Hereniko 1986), and Nauruan string figures recorded by H.C. Maude (2001a&b)
> *children's books* in seven Pacific languages by Mellonie (1991a, b, c) and Hereniko (1997)

*drama* from Fiji collected by Gaskell (2001)
*novels* from the Cook Islands by Davis (1992, 1999), from Fiji by Colpani (2001) and Tarte (1999, 2001), from Solomon Islands by Alasia (2003), and from Tahiti by Teissier-Landgraf (2004)
*poetry* from Papua New Guinea by Winduo (2000), from American Samoa by Sinavaiana-Gabbard (2001), from New Caledonia by Gope (2002) and Kurtovitch (2002), and from Kiribati by Teaero (2004)
*proverbs* from Samoa by Schultz (1994) and from Rotuma by Inia (1998)
*short stories* from Solomon Islands by Julian Maka‘a (1985) and from Nauru by Ben Bam Solomon et al (1996)
*songs* from Tuvalu as recorded by Koch (2000) and from Tonga by Queen Salote et al (2002)
*traditions* of Kiribati by Koru et al. (1986), Tiroba (1990), and Maude and Maude (1994); of the Cook Islands by Kauraka (1987b, 1989) and Jonassen (2003, 2005); of Rotuma by Titifanua and Churchward (1995) and Parke (2002); and of Solomon Islands by Ebebe et al. (1995), Minu et al. (1995), Napata et al. (1995), Niru et al. (1995), Pavukera et al. (1995), Pukera et al. (1995), Rugebatu et al. (1995), Sasa et al. (1995), and Vulivulnana et al. (1995).

Fourth, IPS and Extension Services worked hand in hand. Marjie became successively Director of the Fiji Centre, then Coordinator for Continuing Education, and finally Director of Extension Services. Howard Van Trease, Barrie Macdonald, Asesela Ravuvu, and Marjie helped to produce *Kiribati: Aspects of History,* which proved so popular that the entire book was translated into Kiribati language, *Kiribati: Taraan Karakin,* and into French language, *Kiribati: Histoires d'une histoire* (Van Trease et al. 1979, 1984, 2002), and the English version was reprinted. Hugh Laracy, Marjie, Tito Isala, Konai, and Asesela helped to bring out a similar volume, *Tuvalu: A History* (Laracy 1983), which received subsidies from the South Pacific Commission and the Australian Fund for the Preservation and Development of Pacific Cultures. The Niue Centre and IPS co-published *Tau Tala Tu Fakaholo Ha Niue*, solely in Niuean language (Talagi et al. 2001). We IPS staffers could not have done our work without the expertise and guidance of the USP Centres, which steadily became campuses. Succeeding directors of Extension Services, which became University Extension, remained constant in their support for IPS and SPCAS work.

Fifth, IPS, University Extension, and SPCAS worked with government ministries and with regional and international organisations, always searching to incorporate local expertise and to produce materials for new nations. Co-publications included *Bamboo Leaves* (Ngwele 1989) with the Commonwealth Youth Programme's South Pacific Regional Centre, *Niue: A History of the Islands* (Chapman et al. 1982) with the Government of Niue, *Land in Solomon Islands* (Larmour 1979) with Solomon Islands Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, and *Yumi Stanap: Some People of Vanuatu* (Macdonald-Milne and Thomas 1981) with Lotu Pasifika Productions.

Sixth, IPS and University Extension encouraged USP Centres and other organisations to bring out their own books. For example, Marjie went twice to Solomon Islands in 1980 to facilitate workshops with women. They began with lullabies in indigenous languages, thus producing *Poru Poru* (Analau et al 1980). That gave the women confidence to produce a much larger work of poetry and prose *Mi Mere,* some of which was translated into French as *Poèmes du Pacifique au feminin* (Billy et al 1983a&b). The Australian Cultural Fund granted funds for the workshops and for publication, and the USP Solomon Islands Centre published both books. The Nauru Centre published *Stories from Nauru* (Solomon et al. 1991), and the USP Vanuatu Centre published *Black Stone II* with Black Stone Publications (Molisa 1989). The Vanuatu Cultural Centre published *To Kill a Bird with Two Stones* (MacClancy 1980, 2002b) and its French translation *Faire de deux pierres un coup* (2002a).

Seventh, forming partnerships with other academic and writers organisations was beneficial. For example, after the University of Hawai‘i (UH) had published *Pacific Islands Communication Journal* for a number of years and was ready to pass the baton, IPS began to publish the journal (1985). Each issue generally had a theme. For example, *Pacific Writing and Publishing* carried articles about American Samoa, Cook Islands, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu (Chatterjee et al 1985, and see Fairbairn-Dunlop, this volume). With the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education, IPS co-published *Bikfala Faet, The Big Death* (Bennett et al 1988) and *Independence, Dependence, Interdependence* (R. Crocombe and Tuza 1992). SPCAS co-published with the Cook Islands Ta‘unga Writers and Artists, Hawai‘i’s Seaweeds and Construction, the Kiribati Writers Association, Samoan Writers Association, Solomon Islands Writers Association, and others.

Eighth, starting with small publications encouraged writers, illustrators, and publishers. As soon as they saw a tiny project in print, they began working on larger projects. The Office for Tokelau Affairs in Apia published a children’s book, *Ko Te Pua Vili* (Gau n.d.). Years later, this office and IPS published *Matagi Tokelau,* large volumes – one in Tokelauan, one in English – of cultural studies (Hooper and Huntsman 1991a&b). The USP Centre on Nauru published *Stories from Nauru,* and with IPS, a second edition (Solomon et al. 1991, 1996). The USP Campus in the Marshall Islands published *Life in the Marshall Islands* and its Marshallese translation, *Mour ilo Republic eo an Majol* with IPS (Loeak et al. 2004a&b).

Finally, the Crocombes, IPS and University Extension staff, other USP staff, and many visitors to IPS and University Extension became colporteurs, similar to the missionaries who carried bibles and tracts from door to door, meeting to meeting as they evangelised the islands. We carried more books than clothes as we went from island to island. We perfected boarding planes as if our carry-on bags did not contain fifteen kilogrammes of books. Our suitcases sometimes broke from the weight of the books. Until 9/11, we carried tape and box-cutters to pack and re-pack boxes of books. We set up display tables at conferences, festivals, libraries, and workshops. We hand-delivered orders to local bookshops and USP centres and campuses. We filled shelves at schools and at national libraries. We gifted books to individuals to encourage them to research, write, and publish. And we always brought back ideas and manuscripts.

## Paddling the vaka forward

Marjie and Ron were strong individuals, and their union drove them to accomplish yet more together than they could have done separately. When thanked or honored, Marjie often deflected credit from herself and toward her husband, but his work clearly blossomed because he loved and esteemed her. He wanted to be a part of the long-term project that Marjie had already begun as a teacher: Islanders producing books for Islanders. Because of the work that Marjie and Ron did through the Cook Islands Department of Education, USP, SPSSA, SPCAS, IPS, Extension

Services, University of Auckland's Centre for Pacific Studies, and other organisations, many other people have learned to produce Pacific studies and to encourage Pacific arts and creativity. The Crocombes taught us to "just get on with it," to work incrementally and diligently, not to give up, to work with any and all partners interested in Pacific studies, to ignore the nay-sayers, and to share publications with others, so that they too would research, write, and create, and the cycle would start again. For Marjie and Ron, our admiration is vast, our appreciation is profound.

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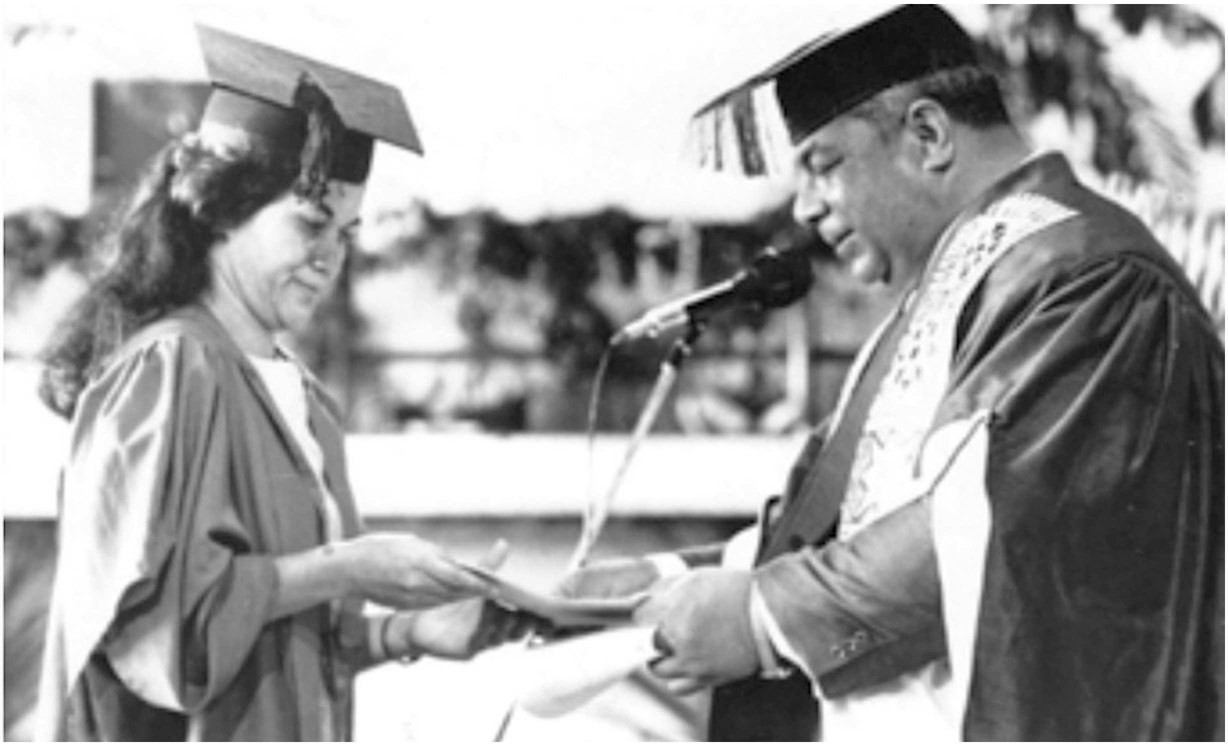
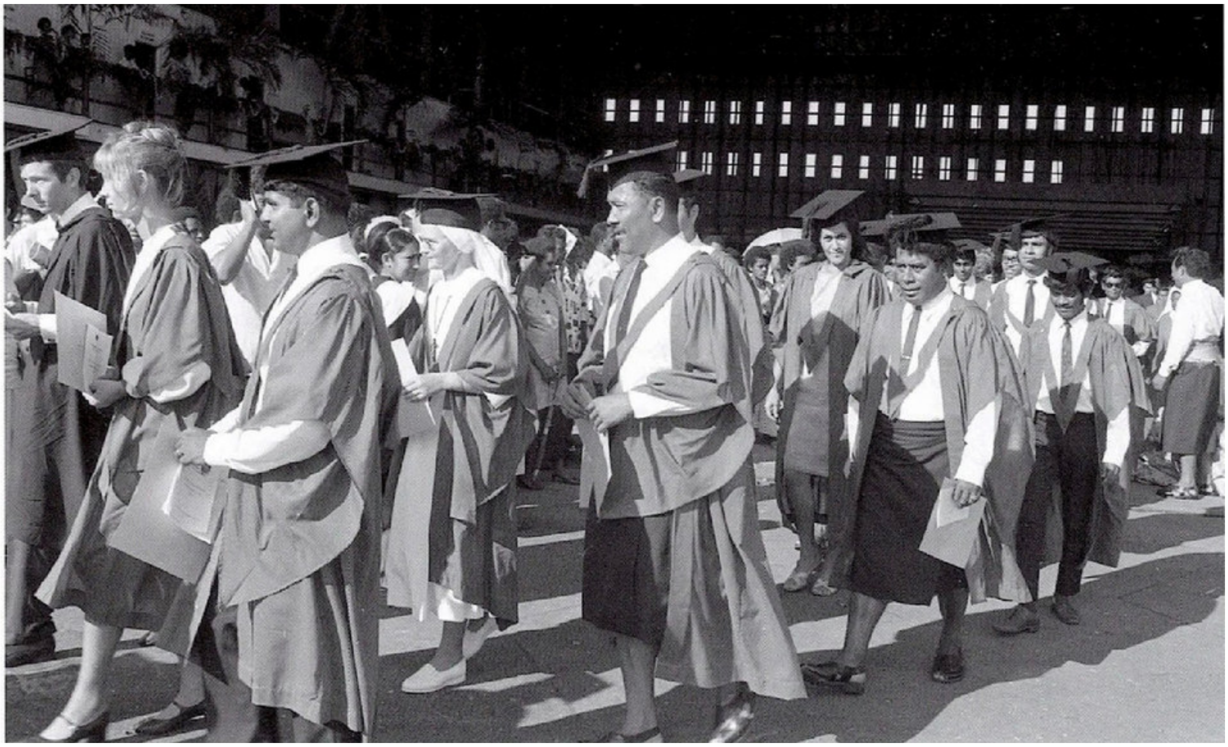
## About the author

Linda Crowl was a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Marshall Islands from 1989 to 1991 and Publications Fellow for the Institute of Pacific Studies at the University of the South Pacific from 1991 to 2004. Researching book publishing in the Pacific Islands, she earned her PhD from the University of Wollongong. She has had posts at the universities of Otago and Victoria in New Zealand, Divine Word University in Papua New Guinea, and Lone Star College in USA.



*Marjorie receives her B.A. degree from the Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific, His Excellency, the King of Tonga, Tāufa'āhau Tupou IV, at the 1971 USP graduation.*



*Graduates leave USP's first graduation ceremony, 1971. Asesala Ravuvu is in the centre with Marjorie Crocombe behind. (photo - Fiji National Archive, M7934)*

# Marjorie Tua'inekore Tere Crocombe
## Select Biographical and Bibliographical Notes

Born: 19 June 1930, Titikaveka, Rarotonga, Cook Islands.
Died: 21 July 2022 (age 92 years), Nikao, Rarotonga, Cook Islands.

*Marjorie Crocombe, Cook Islands Teachers' College Lecturer, 1957.*

## EDUCATION

**1974 - 1975** – South Pacific Commission Radio Production Certificate, Suva, Fiji.
**1973 - 1974** – University of Papua New Guinea, M.A. in Pacific History.
**1970 - 1971** – University of the South Pacific, Suva. B.A., Pacific History/Sociology.
**1968** – University of Hawai'i. Part-time B.A. studies in Pacific/Hawaiian history.
**1967** – University of Papua New Guinea. Part-time B.A. studies in Pacific/ New Guinea history.
**1965** – University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). Part -time B.A. studies in Anthropology.
**1951 - 1952** – Ardmore Teachers' College, Auckland, New Zealand. Teacher's Certificate.
**1947 - 1951** - Whanganui Girls College, Forms 5 & 6.
**1945 - 1946** – Epsom Girls Grammar School, Auckland, Forms 3 & 4.
**1936 - 1944** – Titikaveka Primary School, Rarotonga, Cook Islands.

## EMPLOYMENT

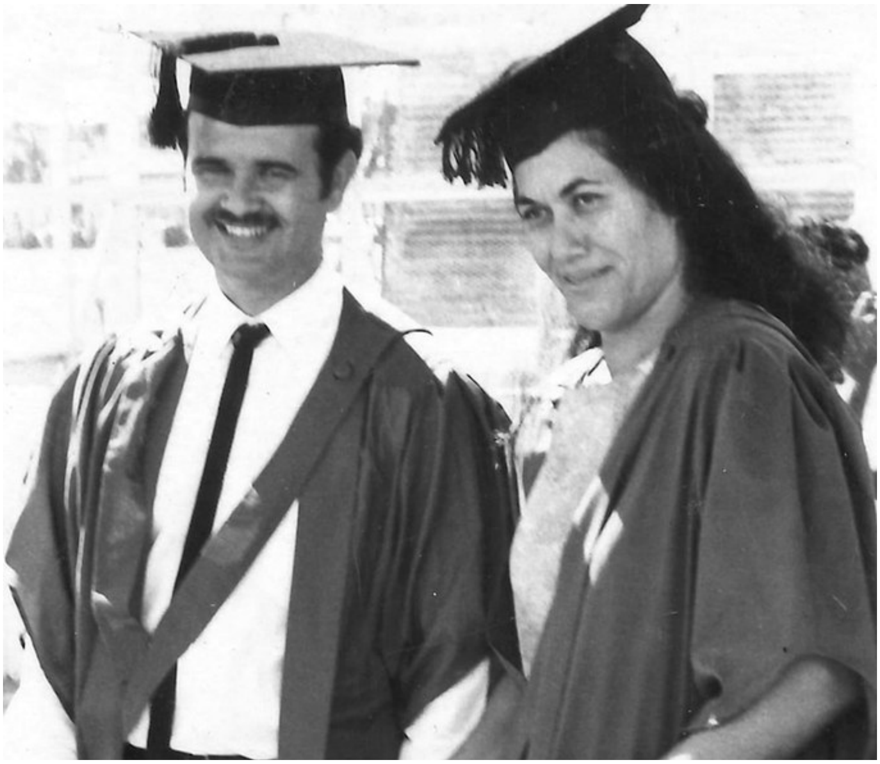
**2019 –** Patron of Te Vairanga Kite Pakari, Cook Islands Research Association Inc.
**2000 –** September/December - Member of Victoria University Link Team (with four others) conducting a review of the Cook Islands Education Sector.
**1999 - 2000** – Temporary Lecturer (Continuing Education) USP Cook Islands. Organised public lectures, creative writing workshops, computer and Māori language courses. Involved many women in these activities. Member, Board of Trustees, Cook Islands Cultural and Historic Places Trust (Ministry of Cultural Development). Voluntary researcher into historic sites and

*Marjorie and a fellow Ardmore Teachers' College student, at the beach c. 1951.*

writing bilingual texts for the signage project on Rarotonga.
**1994 - 2010** – Part-time lecturer on Cook Islands history for Pacific Institute, Hawai'i and Elder Hostel International Visitors Programme offered at Rarotonga.
**1990 - 1993** – University of Auckland, New Zealand. Foundation Director, newly established Centre for Pacific Studies. Senior Lecturer.
**1983 - 1988** – University of the South Pacific (USP) Suva, Fiji. Director of Extension Services. Responsible for administration of Distance and Continuing Education, and Satellite Communications Programmes.
**1987 - 1988** – Professor.
**1983 - 1987** – Reader.
**1981 - 1983** – University of the South Pacific, Co-ordinator of Continuing Education programmes in 12 countries served by the University of the South Pacific.
**1975 - 1978** – University of the South Pacific, Centre Director, Fiji Extension Centre.
**1966 - 1969** – Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC), Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. Prepared and presented *Malanga Moana* - a weekly programme on Pacific music and current affairs.
**1967** – Port Moresby Teachers' College, Papua New Guinea. Part-time lecturer in Pacific history.
**1966 –** Administrative College, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. Part-time lecturer in Pacific history.
**1960 - 1965** – writing articles, books, and children's books.
**1959** - Cook Islands Education Department, Rarotonga. Infant Organising Teacher. Responsible for all infant classes in Cook Islands Primary Schools.
**1957 - 1958** – Cook Islands Teachers' College, Nikao, Rarotonga. Responsible for Teaching Methods for Junior Teacher Trainees.
**1955 - 1956** – Cook Islands Education Department, Rarotonga. Responsible for Grades 4 - 6 in Cook Islands Schools.
**1953 - 1954** – Teacher, Henderson Primary School, Auckland, New Zealand.

## BOOKS

**1994 –** *Post-Secondary Education in the Commonwealth Pacific*, with Ron Crocombe, Commonwealth Secretariat, London. 170 pp.
**1983 –** *Cannibals and Converts: Radical Change in the Cook Islands.* Historical account of the Cook Islands in the 1800s. Translation, editing and annotation of Maretu's manuscript about the introduction of Christianity into the Cook Islands from 1821. Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva. 223 pp.
**1974 –** *They Came for Sandalwood,* Islands Education, Wellington, New Zealand. 62 pp. Reprinted by the South Pacific Creative Arts Society, Suva, 1975, 1978, 1981, 1992, 1993.
**1972** – *If I Live: The Story of Ta'unga.* Lotu Pasifika Press, Suva. 47 pp. Illustrated children's book. Published in German by Missionshilfe Verlag, Hamburg, Germany in 1979. Published in Chinese by the Oceanic Research Unit, Foreign Languages Department of Hefei University, Anhui, China in 1988. Reprinted in 1991, Institute of Pacific Studies, USP, Suva.
**1962 –** *The Works of Ta'unga,* jointly with Ron Crocombe, Australian National University, Canberra. 164 pp. Reprinted 1985, 1992, 1994. Published by the Historical Society of New Caledonia as *Le Temoignage de Ta'unga* in 1980.



*Lionel Brown and Marjorie Crocombe, the first Cook Islands graduates of the University of the South Pacific, at their graduation in 1971 and (below) at the USP 50th Anniversary graduation ceremony, Cook Islands 2018.*

ARE KARI
NATIONAL AU

## CHAPTERS

**2003** – “Tata: Literary expression” as sole author and “Ta Tangata. The culture of violence” with Mereana Taikoko and Va'ine Ko'ai in *Akono'anga Maori: Cook Islands Culture,* Institute of Pacific Studies, Suva, USP Cook Islands Extension Centre, Cook Islands Cultural and Historic Places Trust and the Ministry of Cultural Development, Rarotonga.

**1998** – “Emerging trends in distance education in the South Pacific”, *Distance Education in the Pacific Islands,* Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva in association with the Sasakawa SPINF Fund, Tokyo.

**1994** – “Women and politics in Polynesia”, *New Politics in Polynesia*, Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva in association with the Pacific Islands Political Studies Association, Centre for Pacific Studies, Canterbury University, Christchurch.

**1982** – “Ruatoka: A Cook Islander in Papua History”, *Polynesian Missionaries in Melanesia,* Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva.

**1980 –** *Le Temoignage de Ta'unga ou la Nouvelle Caledonie vue par un “teacher” Polynesien avant l’plantation Europeene.* An abridged version of the The Works of Ta'unga by Ron and Marjorie Crocombe. Publications de la Societe d'Etudes de la Nouvelle Caledonie, Noumea. 155 pp.

## ARTICLES

**2022** – Introduction: The Cook Islands Christian Church Special Issue, *The Journal of Pacific History*, Volume 57, Issue 2 - 3, pp. 125 - 128.

**2019** – “New degree programmes in Pacific languages at the University of the South Pacific: Stories of success and determination”, *State of the Art of Indigenous Languages in Research: A collection of selected research papers,* UNESCO; pp. 264 - 9. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381556

**2019** – “They've always been here but we could not hear them. We could not see them.” Written in celebration of the International Year of Indigenous Languages. https://sites.google.com/view/iyil2019theyvealwaysbeenhere/

**1990** – “The London Missionary Society and Culture. Impacts on and from Rarotonga,” with Ron Crocombe, *South Pacific Journal of Mission Studies*, Suva.

**1978** – “Ruatoka, Cook Islands pioneer missionary who helped to establish the London Missionary in Papua New Guinea in 1872” in *Australian Dictionary of Biography (1851-1890),* Vol. 6, Australian National University, Canberra.

**1972** – “Ruatoka: a Polynesian in New Guinea History” in *Pacific Islands Monthly*, November and December, Pacific Publications, Sydney.

**1968** – “The [Star] Massacre, 1841” in *Études Mélanésiennes*, Vol. 18, No. 20, pp. 51 - 55.

**1962** – “Rarotongan Sandalwood – an enthnohistorical reconstruction” with H.E. Maude, *Journal of the Polynesian Society,* Vol. 71, pp. 32-36. Reprinted in 1968 in *Of Islands and Men: studies in Pacific History* by H.E. Maude, Oxford University Press, Melbourne and the Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1984, 1992 and 1994, Suva.

**1961** – “Polynesian Authors; The Example of Ta'unga” with Ron Crocombe, *Historical Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 37, pp. 92 - 93, Australia and New Zealand.

## PACIFIC LITERATURE

**1987** – “Collecting oral material from indigenous people in the South Pacific” in *A Track of Unknown Waters,* edited by Stella Ree, Scarecrow Press, New Jersey, USA, pp. 304 - 315
**1986** – “Communicating creativity. The South Pacific Creative Arts Society 1972 - 1986”, with Ron Crocombe in *Communications Journal,* Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 70 - 83, Institute of Pacific Studies, Suva.
**1981** – “The South Pacific Creative Arts Society,” report on the first ten years of the Society’s work to promote the development of Pacific literature, Suva, 27pp.
**1979 –** “Independence Movements and the New Wave of Pacific Writers,” *Pacific Islands Monthly,* August, pp. 140 - 148, Pacific Publications, Sydney.
**1973** – “Bush Beer,” short story in *Pacific Islands Monthly,* No. 5, pp. 57 - 58, Pacific Publications, Sydney. Reprinted 1980 in *Lali: An Anthology of Pacific Writings,* edited by Albert Wendt, Longman’s Auckland.
**1970** – “The Healer,” short story in *Kovave,* Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 5 - 9, Jacaranda Press, Brisbane. Reprinted in Russian in *Stories of the South Seas,* edited by A. Petrykoskaya, Moscow. Reprinted in *English in Asian and Pacific Literature,* Vol. 1, State of Hawaii Education Department, Honolulu.

## EDITING

**2016 –** *Cook Islands Art and Architecture*, with Rod Dixon and Linda Crowl, USP Press, Rarotonga, Cook Islands..
**2013** – *Ron Crocombe – E Toa! Pacific Writings to Celebrate his Life and Work*, with Linda Crowl and Rod Dixon, USP Press, Suva.
**2008** – *Takutea: A Collection of Children’s Poems,* USP Cook Islands Campus, Cook Islands Research Association, Ministry of Education, Cook Islands Library & Museum Society, Rarotonga and Enuamanu School, Atiu
**2007 –** *Haven of Nature: Takutea Te Motu Tarava,* a short history by Paiere Mokoroa.
**2003** – *Akono'anga Maori: Cook Islands Culture* with Ron Crocombe, Institute of Pacific Studies, Suva in association with the USP Cook Islands Campus, the Cook Islands Historic and Cultural Places Trust and the Ministry of Cultural Development, Rarotonga.
**1998** – “Oral traditions of Rarotonga, Cook Islands”, Māori and English, Cultural and Historic Places Trust, Rarotonga.
**1998** – *My Dawning Star - Taku Akatauira,* collection of poetry by Kauraka Kauraka, Institute of Pacific Studies and the South Pacific Creative Arts Society, Suva.
**1995 –** *Mana: A South Pacific Journal of Language and Literature,* Vol. 11, No. 1, with Linda Crowl, South Pacific Creative Arts Society, Suva.
**1994 –** *Politics in the South Pacific,* with Ron Crocombe, et al., Institute of Pacific Studies, Suva and Rarotonga.
**1994** – *Mana: A South Pacific Journal of Language and Literature,* Vol. 10, No. 2, South Pacific Creative Arts Society, Suva.
**1992 –** *Te Rau Maire: Poems and Stories of the Pacific,* with Ron Crocombe, Kauraka Kauraka and Makiuti Tongia for the Sixth Festival of Pacific Arts held on Rarotonga. Ministry of Cultural Development, Cook Islands, Institute of Pacific Studies, and the South Pacific Creative Arts Society, Mana Publications, Suva.

**1990 –** *Voluntary Service and Development in the Cook Islands* by Ron Crocombe, (revised), Institute of Pacific Studies, Suva and the USP Cook Islands Campus, Rarotonga.
**1982** – *Mana: A South Pacific Journal of Language and Literature,* Vol. 7, No. 1, Tahiti issue, South Pacific Creative Arts Society, Mana Publications, Suva.
**1980** – *Mana: A South Pacific Journal of Language and Literature,* Vol. 5, No. 1, Cook Islands issue with Makiuti Tongia, South Pacific Creative Arts Society, Mana Publications, Suva.
**1979** – *Mana: A South Pacific Journal of Language and Literature,* Vol. 4, No. 2, South Pacific Creative Arts Society, Mana Publications, Suva.
**1977** – *Third Mana Annual of Creative Writing*, South Pacific Creative Arts Society, Mana Publications, Suva, including articles "Mana and Creative Regional Co-operation," pp. 5 - 6; "Aleki Prestcott, Tonga's Leading Wood Sculptor," pp. 17 - 18; "Pacific Art in Russia," p. 25.
**1974** – *Mana Annual of Creative Writing*, South Pacific Creative Arts Society, Mana Publications, Suva, including articles "Introducing Mana" p. 1; "Can we get our valuable artifacts back from Europe," pp. 16 - 17; "A modern migration: Ellice Islanders in Fiji have ties with Samoa and Tonga," Interview with Fo'ua Tofinga, pp. 29 - 30; "Pacific Art in Denmark," pp. 34 - 35; "Pacific Art in Germany," pp. 41- 42; "Bush Beer," pp. 57 - 58; "Pacific Regional Writers Workshop," pp. 67 - 69.
**1973** – *Mana Annual of Creative Writing*, South Pacific Creative Arts Society, Mana Publications, Suva, including article "The South Pacific Festival of Arts," pp. 69 - 70.
**1973 - 1977 –** Editor of creative arts section of Mana *Pacific Islands Monthly.*
**1972** – Two chapters in children's book *Stories of Pacific People,* Longman Green, Melbourne (for the Fiji Ministry of Education, Suva).
**1969** – Short story "Nero" in *Kovave,* Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 37 - 42, Jacaranda Press, Brisbane.
**1968** – *The Cook Islanders, a Social Studies reader* for the Longman series *Peoples of the Pacific*, Melbourne.
**1965** – *The Journey of Eki,* Social Studies reader, with Professor Frank Johnson, Department of English, University of Papua New Guinea, Jacaranda Press, Brisbane.
**1965** – *Ka e Ua e Teau Tau Hikihikifano,* a Niuean language version of the history book *Two Hundred Changing Years,* Islands Education, Wellington.
**1960** – *Tamariki Mataora,* texts for infant readers with Titi Numanga and Eileen C. Grant, Infant Organiser, Cook Islands Education Department. Reprinted several times by the department.
**1959** – *Te Au Tamariki Mearikiriki* with Eileen C. Grant, Infant Organiser, Cook Islands Education Department, with Islands Education, Wellington. Reprinted by Institute of Pacific Studies, Suva.

## EDUCATION MATTERS

**1998** – "Emerging trends in Distance Education in the South Pacific", *Distance Education in the South Pacific,* Sasakawa SPINF Fund (Tokyo) and the Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva.
**1993** – "Education in the South Pacific", with Ron Crocombe, *Comparative Education,* Vol. 29, No. 3, University of Bristol, England.
**1978** – "The University of the South Pacific and Continuing Education", *ASBAE Courier,* No. 11.
**1961** – "This Australia", *Cook Islands Education Review,* Teachers' College, Rarotonga.
**1960** – "This South Pacific", *Cook Islands Education Review,* Teachers' College, Rarotonga.

## CURRENT AFFAIRS

**1990 - 1997** – Annual reports on political development in Cook Islands, with Ron Crocombe, for the journal *The Contemporary Pacific,* University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu.
**1991** – “The Cook Islands” in *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* Chicago.
**1990** – “The Cook Islands and Niue” with Ron Crocombe, *Journal of Pacific History,* Vol. 24, Australian National University, Canberra.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

**1988** – “Satellites and Centres”, *Pacific Universities: Achievements, Problems and Prospects,* Institute of Pacific Studies, Suva, pp. 119-134.
**1987** – “Information Technology and the Pacific Islands” with Gerritt Bahlmann, *Proceedings of the Pacific Asia Conference on Information Technology:* Pacific Cooperation and Information Technology, PACIT, Vancouver.
**1987** – “USPNet Satellite Developments: an Educational Model from the South Pacific. A personal view from within”, *Pacific Telecommunications Council ‘87 Proceedings,* pp. 465 - 468.
**1987** – “University of the South Pacific Network for Educational Telecommunications (USPNET): current operation and future needs”, *Proceedings on Information Technology,* Seminar, East-West Center, Honolulu.
**1979 –** “Politics and the media”, *Cook Islands Politics*, Polynesian Press, Auckland in association with the South Pacific Social Sciences Association, Suva, pp. 117 - 139.
**1979** – “The Saga of Tension”, *Cook Islands Politics,* with Ron Crocombe, Polynesian Press, Auckland in association with the South Pacific Social Sciences Association, Suva, pp. 243 - 260.

## ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

**2016 - 2017 –** Development of the USP degree program in Cook Islands Māori.
**2004 - 2008** – Punanga Tauturu Inc., Cook Islands Women’s Counselling Centre.
**1997 –** Patron, Pacific Writing Forum, sponsored by the Department of English, University of the South Pacific.
**1997 - 1999** – Cook Islands Prime Minister’s appointee to the Executive Review Committee. Responsible with two other members for assessing and short-listing applicants for chief executive posts in government Ministries, Rarotonga.
**1996 - 1999** – Deputy Chairperson, Cultural and Historic Places Trust, Ministry of Cultural Development, Rarotonga.
**1996 - 1998** – International Advisory Board Member, *Encyclopaedia of the Pacific Islands,* Australian National University, Canberra.
**1996** – Deputy Chairperson, Cook Islands Media Council, Rarotonga.
**1997 - 2000** – President, South Pacific Creative Arts Society.
**1976** – Trustee, Michoutouchkine and Pilioko Trust (Pacific Art), Port Vila, Vanuatu.

*Marjorie Crocombe ceremonially enrobed as a Doctor of the University of the South Pacific by Pro Chancellor Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa, Rarotonga, 2011*

## PACIFIC WOMEN

**2005** – Pilot research project into possible sexual exploitation of children for commercial purposes on Rarotonga and Aitutaki, jointly with Angeline Tuara of Punanga Tauturu Women's Counselling Centre, funded by EXPAT NZ.

**2000 –** "Women's Oral History Project," Extension Services, University of the South Pacific, Suva.

**1995** – "Women in Politics in Polynesia", *New Politics in the South Pacific,* Ron Crocombe, Peter Larmour, et al. (eds.), Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva, pp. 185 - 210.

**1984 –** "Women in the University of the South Pacific", *Pacific Perspectives,* South Pacific Social Sciences Association, Suva.

**1979** – Co-ordinator, Women's Reference Group, University of the South Pacific, Suva.

## AWARDS

**2010 –** Doctor of Letters (D. Litt.) Honoris Causa, University of the South Pacific, conferred August 2011.

**2009** – Order of the British Empire (O.B.E.) for services to the Cook Islands, the Pacific, education, literature and the community.

**2000** – Woman of the Year in Education. Business and Professional Women's Association, Rarotonga.

**1994** – Fellow. Six weeks internship, Pacific Writers' Forum, East West Center, Honolulu, Hawai'i.

**1991** – Visiting Fellow. Two weeks at the Department of Pacific and South East Asian History, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, Canberra.

**1990** – Pacific Islands Women of the Year - one of two from the Cook Islands listed in magazine *Island Business*, Suva, Fiji.

**1985** – Visiting Professor w/ Prof. Ron Crocombe, Ministry of Culture, Beijing, Republic of China.

**1950 –** Head Prefect, Whanganui Girls' College, Whanganui, New Zealand.

**1945 - 1950** – New Zealand Government Scholarship for Secondary and Higher Education and Training.

**1944** – Maui Pomare Medal for top student at Titikaveka Primary School, Rarotonga.

***(Left to right) Ada Rongomatane Ariki, Marjorie and Nari Crocombe at the funeral of Papa Ron Crocombe, National Auditorium, 24 June, 2009***

***(Left to right) Daniel, Tata, Nari, Marjorie, Kevin, Len Crocombe and Dominic Crocombe, OBE investiture ceremony, 24 June, 2009; (below) Hosking and Crocombe Family Group, OBE investiture, 2009***

*(Left) The Queen's Representative. Sir Frederick Goodwin with Marjorie at her OBE investiture, 24 June, 2009;*
*(below, left to right) Tai (Archer) Hosking, Marjorie's sister Erena (Hosking) Tiraa, Marjorie and Ada Rongomatane Ariki of Atiu.*

MANA
a SOUTH PACIFIC JOURNAL of LANGUAGE and LITERATURE

*A display of Mana journals, from the installation ‘Elepaio Press at Hawai‘i State Art Museum, HT22, Honolulu, part of the Hawai'i Triennial, 2022*

# Complete Index to Mana
# Mana Annual to Volume 13 Number 2

MARY NORTHCOTT LEANO AND LINDA CROWL

## Introduction to the Mana Index

Published from 1973 to 2004, the journal *Mana* is a record of the growth of Pacific Islands creative writing, artwork, and analysis fostered by the South Pacific Creative Arts Society that Marjorie Tua'inekore Tere Crocombe, Albert Wendt, and others founded fifty years ago. Sustaining a journal over 30 years is not an easy task, not financially and certainly not logistically over the expanse of the Pacific Ocean, so it is right that we honor its founders and the network they nurtured over decades. More recently, younger writers and artists have started their own groups, journals, and organisations, e.g., *dreadlocks,* Niu Waves, Pacific Centre for Arts and Culture, Pacific Writing Forum, *Savannah Flames,* and more will surely arise. Publishing and keeping records of publications have their challenges in tropical small island environments, but the distribution of books, such as this one, journals, libraries, and the Internet are paths to sustaining evidence of creativity so that future generations may learn from and enjoy the art, legends, plays, poems, songs, and stories of yesteryear.

The following index provides a guide to all the creative works published in *Mana Annual of Creative Writing* (1973) to *Mana: a South Pacific Journal of Arts and Culture, Language and Literature,* volume 13, number 2 (2004). Article titles and names appear as they were published. Capitalization remains as it appeared in the original publication, except titles in all caps. This complete index begins with a list of the volumes and issues in chronological order, with each issue's contributions in alphabetical order by author's last name. Second follows a list by category – art; articles, essays, and prose; drama; interviews; legends; poetry; reviews; short stories; and songs – and within each category, the titles appear in alphabetical order. Third is an alphabetical list of authors and artists by last name and the volume (issue): pages of their work(s). Fourth is a list of countries, with contributors listed alphabetically by last name.

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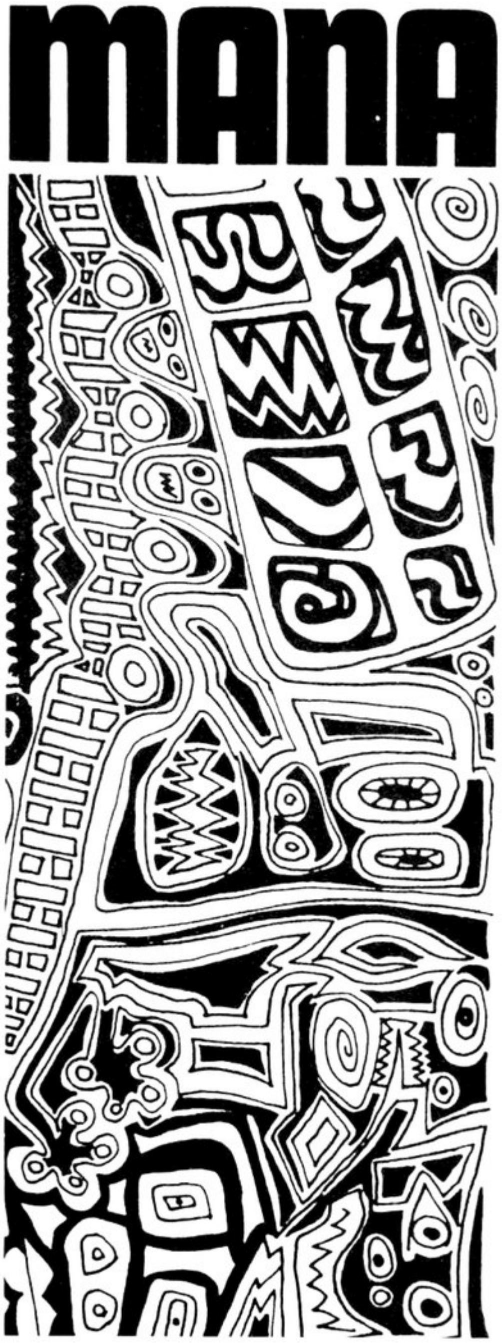

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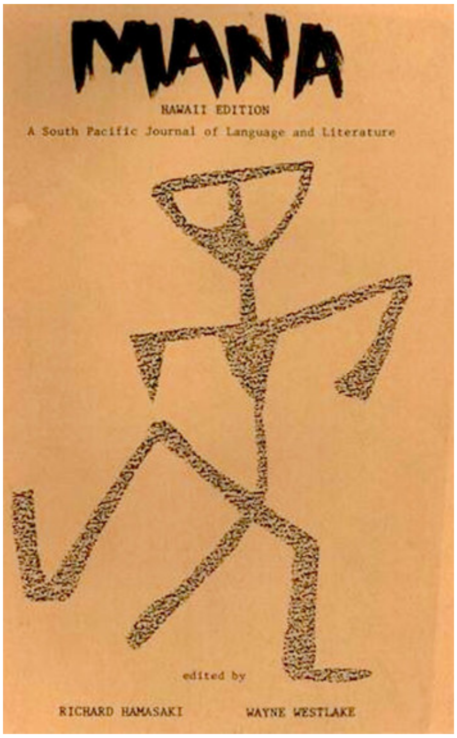

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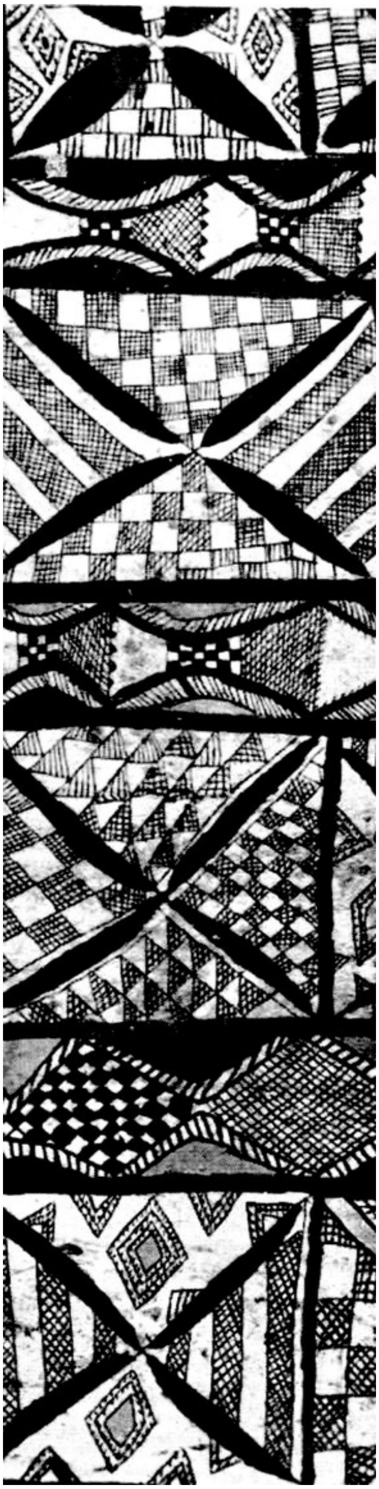

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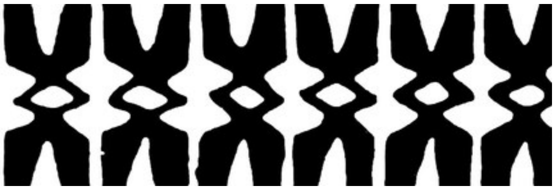

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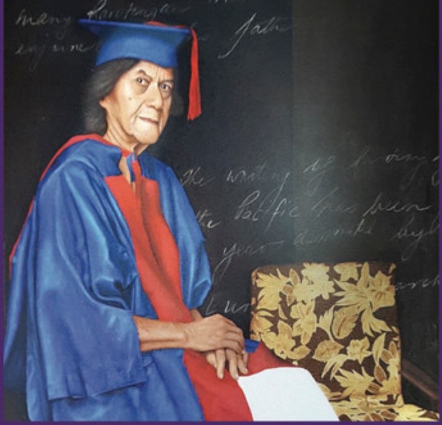
## About the authors

Born and raised in Fiji, **Mary Northcott Leano** has taught history and English at secondary and tertiary institutions throughout the country. She worked on many book projects for the Institute of Pacific Studies at the University of the South Pacific.

**Linda Crowl** was a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Marshall Islands from 1989 to 1991 and Publications Fellow for the Institute of Pacific Studies at the University of the South Pacific from 1991 to 2004. Researching book publishing in the Pacific Islands, she earned her PhD from the University of Wollongong. She has had posts at the universities of Otago and Victoria in New Zealand, Divine Word University in Papua New Guinea, and Lone Star College in USA.



*Portrait of Dr. Marjorie Crocombe*
*by Nanette Lela'ulu*

## MARJORIE CROCOMBE

Marjorie Tua'inekore Tere Crocombe is a Pacific legend in the fields of education, creative writing, ethnohistory, book and journal publishing, and much more. Not only did she research and write, but she was instrumental in encouraging, facilitating, and broadcasting the work of other Pacific people - beginning as a young woman at a time when colonial regimes were mostly dismissive of indigeneous knowledge and views. She continued, indefatigably, to pursue this work until she passed at 92 years of age. Writers, colleagues, and friends of this larger than life woman have contributed poems and essays to honour her life and work. Her dedication, personality and drive were a beacon to all.

The current volume complements an earlier volume honouring Professor Ron G. Crocombe, Marjie's husband and partner in promoting Pacific studies over 50 years. Its origins lie in a special session focused on Marjie during the 2023 Pacific Islands Universities Research Network (PIURN) Conference on Rarotonga, attended by 250 early career Pacific Islands researchers. A number of these have contributed essays acknowledging Marjie's role as pro-genitor of, and inspiration for, their work. The balance of contributions come from her peers and colleagues - now regrettably few in number given Marjie's own considerable longevity. These contributions illuminate Marjie's promotion of creative writing and illustration, academic research and essays, book publishing, and language studies - some through personal recollection, while others document or pursue avenues of research that Marjie initiated.

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